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G. F. R. Henderson

THE SCIENCE OF WAR

A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS AND LECTURES

1892—1903

328

BY THE LATE

COLONEL G. F. R. HENDERSON, C.B.

AUTHOR OF

'STONEWALL JACKSON AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR' ETC.

107717

EDITED BY

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ARGYLL AND SUTHERLAND HIGHLANDERS

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR

BY

FIELD MARSHAL EARL ROBERTS, V.C.

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WITH A PORTRAIT AND 4 MAPS

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PREFACE

For some years before his death it had been Colonel Henderson's intention to make a collection of his occasional papers and to publish them, in book form, in the hope that they might be of service to the profession he loved so well.

Unfortunately, he never found time to carry this intention into effect; and consequently, in the absence of the master-hand, the duty of selection has been entrusted to me.

In the years covered by these pages, 1892–1903, the world learned much of war. It is therefore probable that something of what was written in 1892 would not have been written in 1903; it is even possible that, in some respects, the war in the Far East would have affected the opinions formed in South Africa. Nevertheless, I have found so much food for reflection in each one of these papers that I have not hesitated to include even the very earliest of them; for in these earlier writings is to be found the germ, at least, of nearly all the military thought of to-day.

Similarly the text-books referred to are not those now in use. For unless tactical text-books were constantly to change, they would soon cease to be of any value whatever. The importance of these books as the foundation, but the foundation only, of a military education is as great now as ever it was.

In the Chapter on 'The Training of Infantry for Attack,' *which was written before the South African war*, the true use of the text-books, as well as their limitations, is most ably expounded; while the danger of looking upon them as the

coping stone, instead of as the foundation, of knowledge is clearly shown in the essay on 'The British Army.'

But if, in some minor respects, Colonel Henderson's earlier teachings are not altogether borne out by the riper experience of 1905, his great reputation will in no way suffer. Infallibility is not claimed for him, nor is the gift of prophecy. It will, I think, be generally acknowledged that in the main he was far in advance of his time; and the loss the nation has suffered by his death will, I hope, be even more widely recognised than it is at present.

My thanks are due to the Proprietors of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' who have permitted me to reproduce the first four articles, as well as to the Editors of the 'Journal of the Royal United Service Institution,' and of the 'United Service Magazine,' in whose pages Chapters VI., VII., and XII. originally appeared. For the paper on 'Battles and Leaders of the Civil War' I am indebted to the Proprietors of the 'Edinburgh Review,' while 'Foreign Criticism' originally formed the introduction to Count Sternberg's book 'My Experiences of the Boer War,' and is published here by the permission of Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co. The Secretaries of the Military Society of Ireland and of the Aldershot Military Society have also been most kind in placing at my disposal all the material at their command.

Finally, the essay on 'The British Army' was practically the last thing Colonel Henderson ever wrote. The proofs were corrected by him at Assouan very shortly before his death. It therefore possesses a peculiar interest which distinguishes it from anything else included in this volume.

NEILL MALCOLM,
Captain, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

April 12, 1905.

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PORTRAIT OF COLONEL G. F. R. HENDERSON, C.B. . . *Frontispiece*

MEMOIR

In 1852 the Rev. William George Henderson (afterwards Dean of Carlisle) was appointed Head Master of Victoria School, Jersey, and there, at St. Helier, two years later, on the 22nd June, George Francis Robert, the eldest of his fourteen children, was born. In that retired spot the family spent the next eight years, when they moved to Yorkshire, where the father was appointed Head Master of Leeds Grammar School. Here Frank Henderson's education commenced, and he gradually worked his way to the top of the school.

Good at work and good at games, with a fine physique and a sunny nature, Henderson became a great favourite with his school companions, and evidently left a lasting impression on their minds, for one of them writes of him: 'As a boy he possessed many of the qualities which go to make a great leader, and I can readily believe that his personality acted largely in his influence as a teacher.'

We are told that Henderson won the English prize for his essay on 'Alexander the Great,' an indication of the line his literary talent would follow in after life, from which his readers—military readers

especially—have derived so much instruction as well as pleasure.

Henderson's amusements seem to have been chiefly cricket, football, and acting, 'but cricket was his favourite pastime.' Even in his games his influence for good made itself felt. 'I served under him,' writes a schoolfellow, 'when he captained the cricket eleven, and in those early days he was no ordinary boy; by his own example he made us all feel that we must play the game.'

Henderson put the finishing touch to his school career by gaining a History Scholarship at St. John's College, Oxford.

At the University Henderson somewhat disappointed those who expected him to devote himself entirely to study. His father had intended him for the Church, but his own predilections did not incline that way. He had set his heart on a military career; at Oxford he devoted a good deal of his time to the pursuit of those manly sports best suited to strengthen his physique, and, in 1877, he left the University for Sandhurst an exceptionally well-grown young man.

After a year's sojourn at Sandhurst—where he was captain of the cricket eleven—Henderson was gazetted as 2nd Lieutenant to the 65th Foot at Dinapore, being then nearly twenty-four years old, an unusually advanced age at which to enter the army. He had been but a short time with the battalion in India, when he returned to England, having been promoted to a lieutenancy in the 84th Foot—the linked battalion—then stationed at Dover.

In August 1882 Henderson left the Curragh with his battalion to take part in the first Egyptian campaign. It is characteristic of the self-forgetfulness and the tender nature of the man that his first thought was not of the excitement of the coming campaign, nor of the chance of his own advancement. His sympathy went out to those who were to be left behind, and the anticipation of the women's grief at the inevitable partings from their male belongings for the moment cast a shadow over the glamour of military glory. 'The route,' he wrote to his mother, 'has not yet actually arrived, but we are nearly all packed and ready to start. . . . It is a great bore for us being kept in suspense like this. Of course it is all right for us fellows, we have the voyage and all the excitement and novelty to look forward to, but it is sad work for the women. . . . I hope we shall do our duty and come back safe and sound.'

The voyage to Alexandria, where the battalion arrived on August 17, was uneventful, but with the talent for using to advantage every spare moment, which was so marked in Henderson's later life, the time was not allowed to hang heavily on his hands. 'I have been improving the shining hours,' he writes to his mother, 'by learning Arabic, but it is a difficult language to master.'

Henderson made the most of his opportunities in this campaign. He commanded a half company in action at El Magfar and Tel-el-Mahouta; at Kassassin he commanded a company, whilst at Tel-el-Kebir a few days later he led it into a redoubt occupied by

the enemy. For these services Henderson received the 5th Class of the Order of the Medjideh, the Egyptian medal and clasp, the Khedive's Star, a mention in despatches, and he was also noted for a brevet majority, which he obtained on promotion to the rank of captain four years later.

The day after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir Arabi Pasha surrendered, the campaign closed, and soon after Henderson accompanied his regiment back to England. He hoped, however, that it would not be long before he returned to Egypt, for he had sent in an application for the new Gendarmerie of the Egyptian army, and General Graham, under whom he had been serving, strongly recommended him 'as having shown great discretion and coolness throughout the campaign.' The General, when bidding the regiment good-bye, asked especially for Henderson, and told him he would no doubt get what he wanted, expressing a hope that he would see him back before long. Apparently it was the fact that Henderson was on one occasion the first to get into a redoubt that brought him prominently to notice, and it was rather marvellous that he was not killed in the performance of this brave action, for the first man—almost always an officer—in every other case of the kind was shot dead.

Henderson's hopes of returning to Egypt were doomed to disappointment. For, fortunately for the army, if not for himself, he did not get what he had asked for, as the subsequent nine years (1890–1899) passed at Sandhurst and the Staff College were of

incalculable advantage to the youths and men who were lucky enough to work under his guidance, and had he returned to Egypt he would not, in all probability, have gone to either of the colleges.

In 1883 Henderson married an Irish lady, Mary, the daughter of Mr. Pierce Joyce, of Galway, who proved a true helpmeet to her husband; for, as the years went by and work and responsibilities increased, she rose to each emergency with unfailing cheerfulness and unselfishness, encouraging him by her appreciation and sympathy to carry on those literary labours which eventually brought him world-wide fame.

The first two years of the young couple's married life were spent on a tour of duty with the regiment in Bermuda and Halifax. It was while in the former place that the idea of writing a history of the American War of Secession first presented itself to Henderson's mind. Communication with the mainland being easy, numbers of Americans frequented the island, and no doubt it was association with them, especially those of them who had been through the war, that first aroused Henderson's interest in the subject and determined him to undertake his great work.

In 1885 Henderson and his wife made a trip to Virginia that he might have the opportunity of studying the battlefields on his own account; this he did to such good purpose that when later he paid them a second visit, his knowledge of the ground and his grasp of the circumstances under which the various

battles had been fought, excited the astonishment of men who had themselves taken part in the stirring events of which he afterwards gave the world such a graphic description in 'Stonewall Jackson.'

Thus usefully and pleasantly was Henderson's spare time occupied, and what he wrote of his hero Stonewall Jackson is applicable to himself at this time, for he certainly thoroughly 'enjoyed the life and love which had fallen to his lot, and thanked God for that capacity for happiness with which his nature was so largely gifted.'

The one drawback to perfect happiness was want of means. Henderson was a poor man; there was very little but his subaltern's pay to depend upon, and it became necessary for him to look for some position which, while increasing his income, would leave him sufficient leisure to arrange the mass of information he had collected, as a foundation for the books he intended eventually to write. The Ordnance Department appeared to fulfil these conditions, and in January 1885 he joined it as a Deputy Assistant Commissary General.

It is the popular belief that military officers devote their time and their thoughts to the pursuit of pleasure and amusement rather than to the study of their profession, and I am afraid it must be acknowledged that the belief has not hitherto been without foundation as regards a certain proportion of young men, especially those for whom there was no need to make a career in the army, and who looked on soldiering as a pastime for a few years rather than as

a serious profession to which it was their duty to give all their best powers of mind and body. But it is also true that there have always been a number of officers (it is happily a largely increasing number) deeply impressed with a sense of their responsibility in joining the army, and the necessity for devoting themselves from the first to the intelligent understanding of their duties. Henderson belonged to this category; he read with avidity all military history and carefully studied the plans of the great battles of the world. Yet he was no mere bookworm; he is described by those who knew him best as a model company officer. His consideration and his absolute fairness in his dealings with his men endeared him to them; he heartily joined in their games, at which he was always the most skilful, and the soldiers trusted him as they will always trust and follow a man in whom they thoroughly believe. He was, in fact, a favourite with all ranks, and yet his letters about the time when he joined the Ordnance Department show that he was diffident regarding his own powers, and had no selfish aims or hopes as to personal distinction.

Henderson's first station as a departmental officer was Fort George, in Inverness-shire, and here he began to put in order the material he had so industriously collected. But neither his professional nor his literary work prevented him from taking a part in what was going on around him. He greatly interested himself in the local Volunteers and joined in their cricket and other amusements, and it was mainly

for their instruction that he brought out his first publication, the result of his practical study of the theatre of war in Virginia, entitled 'The Campaign of Fredericksburg, a Tactical Study for Officers.'

'This campaign,' he writes in the Preface, 'has been selected, amongst other reasons, as having been fought by two armies very largely composed of unprofessional soldiers. The lessons it teaches, the shortcomings it reveals, are likely, therefore, to be of exceptional interest and value to that class of officers to whose consideration I venture to recommend them.'

But it was much more than a tactical study, and appealed to a far wider circle of readers than the Volunteers, for it threw a new and brilliant light on the importance of strategy, which came as a revelation to many a professional soldier.

The year 1886 was a memorable one for Henderson, for it brought him his promotion and the promised brevet majority. Thus, his thirty-second birthday, June 22, found him a field officer and an author, whose first work had met with marked success, the little book having attracted so much favourable notice, that it sold at a rate which was quite satisfactory to the author.

Encouraged by the results of his first essay in literature, Henderson plunged yet deeper into work and study, and next turned his attention to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, from which he deduced those lessons which he afterwards taught with so much advantage to the students at the Staff College.

Henderson had been able to study the details of the American War of Secession from the original records written in his own language, but the most authentic accounts of the Franco-Prussian War were written in German—of which Henderson had a very superficial knowledge—he therefore set himself to learn the German language that he might not have to depend upon translations in his study of the war. This is but one example of the thoroughness which characterised all his undertakings.

The battle of Spicheren was his first study, and again he had the instruction of the Volunteers in mind. 'A consideration of the battle will prove of use to those who are interested in the land defence of England, for the ground over which it was fought is in many respects similar to the range of heights which intervene between London and the Channel. There are the same steep hill-sides covered, as is often the case in Kent and Surrey, with woods and with the same open plateaux and deep gullies behind the crest. Volunteer officers whose brigades and regiments have been detailed in case of invasion to occupy portions of this line, will do well to study the manner in which the Spicheren position was defended and attacked.'

The study was a masterly one, but it involved intense application. 'Spicheren,' Henderson writes in 1887, 'is getting on but slowly. I have a mass of material which has to be unravelled and put into order and decent English—not an easy job, especially when the military problems have to be solved as well. I cannot say I work with lightning rapidity; it is

hammer, hammer, hammer, and at present chaos reigns supreme.'

The main lessons which Henderson sought to teach in this most instructive work were the absolute necessity for initiative, and the ready acceptance of responsibility by even the most subordinate officers, the discipline of self-reliance and the fact that self-reliance could only be gained by the most careful education and training.

This was no new theory—General Gneisenau, one of the greatest of Prussian leaders, had recognised its truth as early as 1814. 'What he enjoined,' Henderson tells us, 'was that when a subordinate commander had an opportunity of furthering the general plan of attack, and when, were time to be lost in waiting or sending for orders, the opportunity might escape, he was to act without delay. Such too were the orders of Wellington. But when the rifle and breech-loader came to be employed, it was not at first understood that a deeper zone of fire and a wider front had so increased the difficulties of command, and occasioned so much delay in transmitting orders, that the same latitude which had hitherto been allowed to the leaders of advanced guards and other detachments, must now be granted to the leaders of the fighting line.

. . . . . .

A strong spirit of initiative, correct and deep-rooted instinct and unity of action are the qualities which are essential for the successful leading of the fighting line; and these are created by sound general

principles " being engrafted into the flesh and blood," thereby securing intelligent decision; by a careful training of the capacity for independent action; by the uniform tactical education of the officers, and by the constant practice of battle exercises.'

To the Prussian army von Moltke had given this uniform training. The French army were without it. To quote Henderson again:—'The Emperor and his councillors relied on the experience of the army, although gained under obsolete conditions; on its courage and warlike aptitude; but they taught it nothing. The nation blindly believing in the invincibility of its arms, and ignorant of the causes of success and defeat in war, acquiesced in this neglect; and in the hour of trial, the army, although conspicuous as ever for gallantry and devotion on the field of battle, proved unable to arrest the victorious march of a well-trained enemy.

. . . . . .

'At no single point did the Prussians show themselves superior in courage or hardihood to their opponents. But they did not, like their opponents, rely on natural attributes or martial spirit alone. Officers and men had received the highest training, both of mind and body, that was possible in peace. It was this training which turned the scale.'

Is not the very same lesson being now repeated in Manchuria? The Russians, who considered themselves invincible, trusting to their numbers and their prestige, have been beaten in every instance by the carefully trained Japanese.

Surely these two examples of the futility of numbers and courage without training should be a warning sufficiently clear to rouse the British public to the advisability of taking a real practical interest in their army, and should prevent their waiting until some terrible crisis opens their eyes to the fact that the most disastrous consequences must result to us, as to other nations, from the fatal policy of delaying to prepare for war until war is about to be declared.

We have hitherto been saved from the horrors of invasion by possessing a navy superior to that of every other country to protect our sea-girt islands, and we have therefore been spared the burden of conscription. But our most important and valuable possession—India—now places us in the position of a Continental Power. No navy can save us from invasion in that quarter: India must be defended by an army, and by a numerous and well-trained army, such an army as we can never hope to possess unless the manhood of this country is willing to undergo a carefully considered course of physical training and tuition in the use of the rifle.

To return to the subject of my Memoir.

Henderson appears to have been very despondent about his prospects in the army while he was at Gibraltar, to which station he was moved in 1887. What he wanted, and what he felt himself best fitted for, was an appointment at Sandhurst. The prospect of obtaining such an appointment was one of the objects which acted as a spur to him in his literary endeavours.

He had not, however, to wait very long. A few more months of Ordnance work, a spell of leave, and then the desired goal was reached, and in September 1889 he was sent to Sandhurst by Lord Wolseley as Instructor in Tactics, Military Administration, and Law.

Henderson's first book, 'The Campaign of Fredericksburg,' which had been published anonymously, had attracted Lord Wolseley's notice, and so soon as he found out who the author was, he interested himself in Henderson's future.

There is so much that is similar in the conditions of the early lives of 'Stonewall Jackson' and Henderson, that much that the latter wrote of the former seems to me to be applicable to his own career, and one cannot help thinking that the feeling he ascribed to Jackson in like circumstances must have been the reflection of his own. Each had been through a campaign in which he had gained distinction: Jackson in Mexico, Henderson in Egypt. A period of garrison duty had to be gone through in each case before, to Jackson came the offer of the Professorship of Artillery Tactics at the Virginia Military Institute, and to Henderson that of the Instructorship at Sandhurst. Like 'Stonewall Jackson,' 'it was with the view of fitting himself for command' that Henderson accepted this post, and took up the congenial duty of teaching tactics to the cadets at the Royal Military College, a task for which his exhaustive study of Military History had so eminently fitted him.

Henderson spent three most useful years at Sandhurst. His teaching was not limited to lectures in

the classroom. A practical soldier himself, he felt that theory and practice should go hand in hand, and that demonstrations in the field were necessary to the perfect comprehension of his theoretical teaching; accordingly he obtained permission to take the cadets out skirmishing and patrolling. Nor was Henderson content to be merely the instructor of his pupils. As at school and with his regiment his geniality, his love of fun, his skill at and participation in games added much to his popularity, and exemplified the fact that it is possible to combine a fine intellect with an aptitude for games requiring bodily strength and capacity, while it proved the reality of his belief that, to the training of the intellect by hard study should be added the training of the body by the practice of whatever game or sport was conducive to the production of a quick eye and ready hand.

Henderson seems thoroughly to have enjoyed his Sandhurst days. His official work was congenial, and he had time for his literary studies. His reputation as a writer on military subjects was now established, and in 1891 the third edition of 'Fredericksburg' was issued. Letters in the 'Times' and essays in the 'Edinburgh Review' from his pen appeared, and offers from publishers poured in upon him. 'I have more offers of articles than I can accept,' he writes; 'the new "Military Magazine" offers me a guinea a page for anything I like to write. This is cheering, but I shall stick to the "Edinburgh." The worst of it is that it is such hard work.'

Work seems at this time to have become rather a

trouble to him, and it is now apparent that even at that early date his health had begun to suffer. But, notwithstanding this, and the extraneous labour which circumstances forced upon him, and to which he applied the same zeal and conscientiousness that made all his work so valuable, he gave a proportion of his time and thoughts to his great book 'Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War.' It was a labour of love, and remains a monument of his industry and originality. Begun in 1890, it was not published for eight years, years which were even fuller than those which had preceded them, for the end of 1892 saw Henderson transferred from Sandhurst to the Staff College as Professor of Military Art and History.

The change was welcomed by Henderson because the new appointment gave him the opportunity of impressing his ideas more directly on those for whom the immediate future, in the event of war, might have in store great responsibilities.

At Sandhurst, Henderson's usefulness was limited; the utmost he could do was the influencing young minds, fresh from public schools, by turning their thoughts to the serious study of their profession. But, at the Staff College, he had as pupils the best brains of the army, requiring no incentive to study, but prepared to absorb eagerly the knowledge which he was so fitted to impart, and only too anxious for the opportunity which would enable them to prove they could bear the test of service in the field.

As at Sandhurst, so at the Staff College, Hender-

son introduced original methods of teaching. He added largely to the practical out-of-door work, and in his personally conducted tours to the battlefields of the campaigns upon which he had been lecturing, his intimate knowledge of the ground and his splendid memory for detail enabled him to describe to his auditors what actually took place, with a realistic distinctness which created a lasting impression on their minds.

Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Hildyard, who was Commandant of the Staff College during the greater part of Henderson's professorship, has contributed an appreciative account of the manner in which he carried on his duties at the College, which is interesting and valuable, as the deliberate opinion of the man best able to describe his life at this time, and to judge of the merit of his work. Sir Henry writes:—'It may be safely said that no period of his career was fraught with greater advantages than the seven years between December 1892 and December 1899, when he occupied the post of Professor at the Staff College. The importance of this position, as affording unparalleled opportunities for influencing the officers placed in his charge for instruction in military art, was fully recognised by Colonel Henderson. From the moment of his taking over the duties till the day he left the College, he devoted himself to them with the closest application and most complete single-mindedness. The spirit in which he conceived those duties was one that may well serve as an example to those who follow him.

He considered that his mission was not restricted to the mere teaching of the subjects that entered into his curriculum, but extended to the extraction from those subjects of every lesson that should go to the making of an efficient commander in the field, and to its complete assimilation by the officers under his instruction. If any testimonial were necessary to the success of the system adopted by him, it is to be found strikingly recorded in the exploits of many of the column commanders in the late war, who graduated under Colonel Henderson at the Staff College. The amount of work he got through was enormous: the preparation and delivery of most carefully thought-out lectures on "Military History," from which were drawn valuable lessons on every aspect of strategy and tactics. Whole days were spent on the ground working out and criticising tactical schemes. No practical point, whether in connection with the tactical use of ground, the aspect of fire, or the framing and conveyance of orders, being ignored. In all these exercises, whether in the lecture-hall or in the field, the extraordinary qualifications of Colonel Henderson as an instructor were equally conspicuous. He showed great clearness of thought and perception, simplicity and correctness of demonstration, a practical mind that discarded at once methods impracticable in war, and untiring industry and patience.

'There was yet another way in which Colonel Henderson made the influence of his sound views and profound knowledge of military operations felt, and

this was in the observations made by him on the military memoirs written by officers on past campaigns, and on subjects of imperial military interest. There was no paper, however crude, wherein he did not notice points for encouragement towards renewed effort; so there was no paper, however complete, to which his practical and well-thought-out remarks did not add value. To him it was a labour of love, and each memoir, good or indifferent, received the same measure of attention from him; it was, nevertheless, a very severe labour, gone through with indomitable perseverance and pluck which always characterised him.

'There is one more aspect of Colonel Henderson's influence while at the Staff College which must not be left without mention—for it was a most important one—his hours of recreation, rare and curtailed as they were, he loved best to spend at the College, talking over, with the many who were anxious to discuss them, disputed points raised by the latest lecture, or the most recent work on military literature. And it would be difficult now to say where most was really learned by the officers anxious to acquire knowledge in the military art—in the lecture-hall or in the ante-room of the Staff College Mess.'

It is a pleasing picture which General Hildyard has placed before us. Henderson by the ante-room fireside pouring out the rich treasures of his well-stocked mind in familiar converse, ready to receive suggestions from the veriest tiro in strategy, with no parade of superior knowledge, never tedious, never didactic,

entering into the difficulties of each and all, and by his own enthusiasm carrying with him his listeners, who, while intensely interested, remained wholly unconscious of being instructed.

It was at this time that I became acquainted with Henderson. The various military societies throughout the country were glad to secure the services of so interesting and instructive a lecturer, and in response to the invitation of the Dublin Military Society he came over to Ireland in 1897 to lecture on Wellington, when I had the pleasure of receiving him at the Royal Hospital.

Soon, like all others with whom he came in contact, I succumbed to the spell of Henderson's most fascinating personality. The lecture that he delivered in Dublin is included in the pages of this book, and all who read it will be able to realise the pleasure with which his audience listened to him.

Henderson's success as a lecturer was great. Gifted with a finely modulated voice, and an easy but impressive delivery, his cheery pleasant manner of speaking, absolutely free from any symptom of pedantry or attempt at forced eloquence, added charm to the intellectual appreciation with which an intelligent audience listened to his lectures. His style was simple and clear; he marshalled his facts with ease, and enforced them with a wealth of illustration drawn from his wide reading, and from those facts he deduced with impressive directness the lessons he wished to convey.

Henderson's great work, 'Stonewall Jackson and

the American Civil War,' published in 1898, was on rather different and wider lines than his previous books, which had been written for a limited class, and were intended for professional instruction. 'Fredericksburg' and 'Spicheren' were merely studies of campaigns, although they contain, especially the former, some pleasant reading for the amateur, touches of portraiture, and pictures of scenery, sufficiently vivid to show the effect of the physical features of the country, or the movements of the troops engaged.

But in 'Stonewall Jackson' Henderson gives an elaborate and delightful study of character, drawn with a loving insight born of intense sympathy. As a biography it is a model, and as such it may be read with pleasure by those for whom the details of the campaign may not have any great interest. The amount of work put into it must have been stupendous, but the object which the author had in view, to teach the nation generally to understand the supreme importance of a knowledge of strategy, sustained him in his arduous task throughout the eight years he gave to it.[1]

[1] In his Preface to this interesting book, Henderson writes:

'Strategy is a science which repays the student, even if he has no direct concern with military affairs; for not only does a comprehension of its inimitable principles add a new interest to the records of stirring times and great achievements, but it makes him a more useful citizen.

'In free countries like Great Britain, her colonies, and the United States, the weight of the intelligent opinion, in all matters of moment, generally turns the scale; and if it were generally understood that, in regular warfare, success depends on something more than the capacity for handling troops in battle, many far-reaching mistakes might be avoided. The campaigns of the Civil War show how much may be achieved, even with relatively feeble

We are told how Jackson applied himself day by day to the details of his profession, and how he read and re-read the history of the campaigns undertaken by the acknowledged Masters of the Art of War; how when Jackson, in his turn, became engaged in war himself, all the knowledge thus gained, in the seclusion of the study, was brought to bear upon the problems he was called upon to solve, and how he was guided by the consideration of what these great masters had done under similar conditions.

Having seen the effect that Captain Mahan's works had produced in modifying the naval policy of the British nation, Henderson, I quite believe, hoped that his own writings might exert the same influence on its military policy. My earnest desire is that his hope may yet be realised.

No sooner had Henderson finished and published 'Stonewall Jackson' than he turned again to the lessons of the war of 1870, and in the 'Battle of Woerth' he gave to the world yet another of his enlightening studies. It appeared in 1899 and commended itself to the military reader. But from the

means, by men who have both studied strategy and have the character necessary for its successful practice; and they also show, not a whit less forcibly, what awful sacrifices may be exacted from a nation ignorant that such a science exists. How seldom do we hear a knowledge of strategy referred to as an indispensable acquirement in those who aspire to command? How often is it repeated, although in so doing the speakers betray their own shortcomings, that strategy is a mere matter of common-sense? Yet the plain truth is that strategy is not only the determining factor in civilised warfare, but that, in order to apply its principles, the soundest common-sense must be most carefully trained.'

study of the theory of war, soldiers were now called to the practice of its grim reality, for in this year began the struggle in South Africa, and the nation was forced to make an effort such as had not been called for since the beginning of the century.

Unprepared as we were, and with the theatre of war six thousand miles from our shores, the campaign began most unfavourably for us, and it soon became apparent that the task before us was a far harder one than had been realised, except by a very few.

For some time before war was declared, I had given a considerable amount of thought to the probability of an outbreak of hostilities in South Africa, and to the measures which should be adopted to meet such an outbreak. While still thinking over this problem, I read 'Stonewall Jackson,' and was much struck with the extraordinary effect which strategy—whether Lee's or Jackson's—had upon the campaign in Virginia, and also with the result of Jackson's swift and unexpected movements, as described by Henderson.[1]

[1] 'He knew the effect his sudden appearances and disappearances would have on the *moral* of the Federal Generals, and he relied as much on upsetting the mental equilibrium of his opponents as in concentrating against them superior numbers. Nor was his view confined to the field of battle and his immediate adversary. It embraced the whole theatre of war. The motive power which ruled the enemy's politics as well as his armies was always his real objective. From the very first he recognised the weakness of the Federal position—the anxiety with which the President and the people regarded Washington—and on this anxiety he traded. Every blow struck in the Valley campaign from Kernstown to Cross Keys was struck at Lincoln and his Cabinet; every movement, including the advance against Pope on Cedar Run, was calculated

Bearing all this in mind, when appointed to the chief command of the Army in South Africa, I determined that the wisest thing to do, both from a military and political point of view, was to march on the capitals of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, and so to break up their combination.

It will be seen from this what a high opinion I had formed of Henderson's abilities. I was convinced that he was well fitted for Staff employ in the field, and that, given the opportunity, he would be able to turn his knowledge to practical account—I therefore applied for his services. My request was granted, with the result that Henderson accompanied me to South Africa, and, on my taking over the command in January 1900, I appointed him Director of Intelligence. He threw himself into his work with his usual energy, and did much to reorganise and extend this most important department.

We were sadly in want of maps. Of the Orange Free State there were none, but, during the short time we were in Cape Town, Henderson managed to get skeleton maps prepared of the several districts, which proved of the greatest use to me.

As regards maps of the Transvaal we were more fortunate, for Henderson discovered, lying in the Post Office, several hundred of that province, which had

with reference to the effect it would produce in the Federal Councils; and if he consistently advocated invasion, it was not because Virginia would be relieved of the enemy's presence, but because treaties of peace are only signed within sight of the hostile capital.'—*Stonewall Jackson*, vol. ii. p. 697.

been prepared by the Transvaal Revenue Authorities, under the superintendence of a Mr. Jeppé. The printing of the maps had been done in Austria, and they had quite recently arrived in Cape Town. When the advance into the Transvaal began, these maps were of the utmost service.

Since his death it has become evident that Henderson knew himself to be in a bad state of health when he was offered this appointment at the seat of war, and that he even hesitated about accepting it, for he wrote from Cape Town :—'It was far better to accept. I could not have stood waking up every morning and thinking that I was one of the few soldiers who were doing nothing for the country ; I should never have felt like a man again.'

In February Henderson accompanied the Army Headquarters to the Modder River, and with the nearer approach to the enemy his thoughts naturally turned to the fate that might be in store for him. 'I went to Holy Communion just before starting,' he writes, 'and I hope I shall get another chance. before we meet the enemy: but even if I don't I feel quite cheery about everything. God has been very good to us—to me especially—and whatever is to be it is all right. I hope He will help me to do my duty.'

In this calm trustful spirit Henderson reached the Modder River camp, and there 'his boys' of the Staff College came to him at all hours, eager to discuss those actual problems of war which they had so often studied in theory, glad of the chance given them of

referring their doubts and difficulties to the instructor the influence of whose teaching they still felt. Good it was for them to be associated at such a time with one whose counsel was sure to be wise, and whose example they could not do better than follow.

For a few days longer Henderson continued in the field; he witnessed the move from the Modder, but he did not get far himself, for he completely broke down and had to leave for Cape Town before we reached Paardeberg.

It was an intense disappointment to Henderson (as it was to me) that he should have to abandon the work which he had begun with such marked success. In referring to this unhappy necessity in a letter written a few weeks later, he showed a manly resignation and a trust in God that is most touching. 'I have got over my disappointment at not being up at Cronje's surrender, and I feel that whatever is, or whatever will be, even if it is to go home invalided, is best.'

Henderson arrived in England greatly shattered in health, and it was not until the following August that he was sufficiently recovered to undertake fresh duties. He was then appointed to write the official history of the war, a work for which he was eminently fitted, and it is indeed a misfortune that he did not live to accomplish it.

In the autumn of 1901 Henderson went back to South Africa to review the battlefields and study that part of the country which he had not seen. He travelled rapidly from place to place and worked incessantly. It all proved too much for him; his

health again broke down, and in February 1902 he returned to England.

For a short time after his arrival Henderson improved in health and applied himself with his wonted zeal to the work in hand. He laboured continually until the end of 1902, when it became only too evident that he had overtaxed his strength, and that he could not, in his weakened state, get through an English winter. He was, therefore, ordered to Egypt, where he continued to work almost to the last day of his life.

Towards the end of February Henderson took a turn for the worse, and the end came at Assouan on March 5, 1903.

The affectionate tributes to Henderson's memory by his many friends are a testimony to his pure and stainless character. Blessed with a cheerful temperament, he brightened the lives of all with whom he was associated, and his letters display a spirit of playful tenderness towards those whom he loved, which is most attractive. Generous and thoughtful for others, he took no thought for himself, and only valued money for what it might have enabled him to do for those who needed his help.

The influence of such a man must bear good fruit, and the more widely his writings are read, and the more closely his teachings are followed, the more successful will be our would-be commanders and the better it will be for England when again she is forced to go to war.

ROBERTS, F.M.

April, 1905.

THE SCIENCE OF WAR

CHAPTER I

WAR

It is not easy to determine whether industrial progress, improved organisation, the spread of education, or mechanical inventions, have wrought the greatest change in the military art.

War is first and foremost a matter of movement; and as such it has been considerably affected by the multiplication of good roads, the introduction of steam transport, and by the ease with which draught animals can be collected. In the second place war is a matter of supply; and the large area of cultivation, the increase of live stock, the vast trade in provisions, pouring the foodstuffs of one continent into another, have done much to lighten the inevitable difficulties of a campaign. In the third place war is a matter of destruction; and while the weapons of armies have become more perfect and more durable, the modern substitutes for gunpowder have added largely to their destructive capacity. Fourthly, war is not merely a blind struggle between mobs of individuals, without guidance or coherence, but a conflict of well-organised masses, moving with a view to intelligent co-operation, acting under the impulse of a single will, and directed against a definite objective. These masses, however, are seldom so closely concentrated that the impulse which sets them in motion can be promptly and easily communicated to each, nor can the right objective be selected without some knowledge of the enemy's strength and dispositions. Means of intercommunication, therefore, as well as methods of observation,

are of great importance; and with the telegraph, the telephone, visual signalling, balloons, and improved field-glasses, the armies of to-day, so far as regards the maintenance of connection between different bodies of troops, and the diffusion, if not the acquiring, of information, are at a great advantage compared with those of the middle of the nineteenth century.

War, then, in some respects, has been made much simpler. Armies are easier to move, to feed, and to manœuvre. But in other respects this very simplicity has made the conduct of a campaign more difficult. Not only is the weapon wielded by the general less clumsy and more deadly than heretofore, less fragile and better balanced, but it acts with greater rapidity and has a far wider scope. In a strong and skilful hand it may be irresistible: in the grasp of a novice it is worse than useless.

In former times, when war was a much slower process, and armies were less highly trained, mistakes at the outset were not necessarily fatal. Under modern conditions the inexperienced commander will not be granted time in which to correct his deficiencies and give himself and his troops the needful practice. The idea of forging generals and soldiers under the hammer of war disappeared with the advent of 'the nation in arms.' It is not too much to say that every state in Europe, except Great Britain, can employ the whole of its resources, physical, material, and intellectual, at the outset. Military organisation has become a science, most carefully studied, both by statesmen and soldiers. Its principles, as a general rule, have been so thoroughly applied, that the moment war is declared the manhood of the country stands ready, armed, organised, and trained to defend the frontier. The lessons of history have not been neglected. Previous to 1870, in one kingdom only was it recognised that intellect and education play a more prominent part in war than stamina and courage. Taught by the dire disasters of 1806, Prussia set herself to discover the surest means of escaping humiliation for the future. The shrewdest of her sons undertook the task. The nature of war was analysed until the secrets of success and failure were laid bare; and on

these investigations a system of organisation and of training was built up which, not only from a military, but from a political, and even an economical point of view, is the most striking product of the nineteenth century. The keynote of this system is that the best brains in the state shall be at the service of the war lord. None, therefore, but competent soldiers are entrusted with the responsibility of command, and the education of the officer is as thorough, as systematic, and as uniform as the education of the lawyer, the diplomatist, and the doctor. In all ages the power of intellect has asserted itself in war. It was not courage and experience only that made Hannibal, Alexander, and Cæsar the greatest names of antiquity. Napoleon, Wellington, and the Archduke Charles were certainly the best educated soldiers of their time; while Lee, Jackson, and Sherman probably knew more of war before they made it than anyone else in the United States.

But it was not until 1866 and 1870 that the preponderating influence of the trained mind was made manifest. Other wars had shown the value of an educated general, these showed the value of an educated army. It is true that Moltke, in mental power and in knowledge, was in no wise inferior to the great captains who preceded him; but the remarkable point of his campaigns is that so many capable generals had never before been gathered together under one flag. No campaigns have been submitted to such searching criticism. Never have mistakes been more sedulously sought for or more frankly exposed. And yet, compared with the mistakes of other campaigns, even with that of 1815, where hardly a superior officer on either side had not seen more battles than Moltke and his comrades had seen field days, they were astonishingly few. It is not to be denied that the foes of Prussia were hardly worthy of her steel. Yet it may be doubted whether either Austria or France ever put two finer armies into the field than the army of Bohemia in 1866 and the army of the Rhine in 1870. Even their generals of divisions and brigades had more actual experience than those who led the German army corps. Compared with the German rank and file, a great part of their non-commissioned officers and

men were veterans, and veterans who had seen much service. Their chief officers were practically familiar with the methods of moving, supplying, and manœuvring large masses of troops; their marshals were valiant and successful soldiers. And yet the history of modern warfare records no defeats so swift and so complete as those of Königgrätz and Sedan. The great host of Austria was shattered to fragments in seven weeks; the French Imperial army was destroyed in seven weeks and three days; and to all intent and purpose the resistance they had offered was not much more effective than that of a respectable militia. But both the Austrian and the French armies were organised and trained under the old system. Courage, experience, and professional pride they possessed in abundance. Man for man, in all virile qualities, neither officers nor men were inferior to their foes. But one thing their generals lacked, and that was education for war. Strategy was almost a sealed book to them; organisation a matter of secondary importance. It was no part of their duty, they declared, to train the judgment of their subordinates; they were soldiers, and not pedagogues. Knowledge of foreign armies and their methods they considered useless, and of war prepared and conducted on 'business principles' they had never even dreamt.

The study of war had done far more for Prussia than educating its soldiers and producing a sound system of organisation. It had led to the establishment of a sound system of command; and this system proved a marvellous instrument in the hands of a great leader. It was based on the recognition of three facts: first, that an army cannot be effectively controlled by direct orders from headquarters; second, that the man on the spot is the best judge of the situation; and third, that intelligent co-operation is of infinitely more value than mechanical obedience. To explain more fully. In military operations space, time, and opportunity are dominant factors. For many reasons an army in the field can never be closely concentrated, and it is thus impossible for the commander to see everything for himself, to detect with his own eyes every blunder the enemy may commit, or to communicate his

orders in such good time that openings shall not be lost. Nor can he forecast and provide for every contingency, for it is generally the unexpected that happens; the enemy's blunders cannot be foreseen; and events move with such rapidity that an order an hour old is often quite inapplicable to the situation. Moreover, if those portions of the army unseen by the commander, and not in direct communication with him, were to await his orders before acting, not only would opportunities be allowed to pass, but other portions of the army, at critical moments, might be left without support. It was understood, therefore, in the Prussian armies of 1866 and 1870, that no order was to be blindly obeyed unless the superior who issued it was actually present, and therefore cognisant of the situation at the time it was received. If this was not the case, the recipient was to use his own judgment, and act as he believed his superior would have directed him to do had he been aware how matters stood. Again, officers not in direct communication with headquarters were expected not only to watch for and to utilise, on their own initiative, all opportunities of furthering the plan of campaign or battle, but, without waiting for instructions, to march to the thunder of the cannon, and render prompt assistance wherever it might be required. It was long before the system was cordially accepted, even in Germany itself; and it has been fiercely criticised.

To soldiers whose one idea of command might be summarised in the sentence, 'I order, you obey,' and in whose eyes unqualified and unthinking obedience was the first of virtues, the new teaching appeared subversive of all discipline and authority. If, they said, subordinates are to judge for themselves whether an order is to be executed or not; if they are to be encouraged to march, to attack, or to retreat, on their own volition; if, in a word, each of them is to be considered an independent commander, the superior can never be certain, at any given moment, where his troops are or what they are doing, and to manœuvre them as a united whole will be out of the question. Was it likely, they asked, that a junior officer left to himself would act as his superior would have directed him to act had he himself been present? Was it

not probable that he would hinder rather than further the general plan; and would not such untrammelled freedom lead to independent ventures, prolific perhaps of personal glory, but absolutely destructive of the harmony of action essential to success? These dangers, however, had been foreseen; and, while they were recognised as real, they were not considered so inevitable as to forbid the encouragement of an unfettered initiative, nor so formidable as to be insurmountable. The first step was to make a clear distinction between 'orders' and 'instructions.' An 'order' was to be obeyed, instantly and to the letter. 'Instructions' were an expression of the commander's wishes, not to be carried out unless they were manifestly practicable. But 'orders,' in the technical sense, were not to be issued except by an officer actually present with the body of troops concerned, and fully aware of the situation; otherwise 'instructions' only would be sent. The second step was to train all officers to arrive at correct decisions, and so to make certain, so far as possible, that subordinates, when left to themselves, would act as their superiors would wish them to do. The third step was to discourage to the utmost the spirit of rash and selfish enterprise.

In the German army of to-day the means employed to ensure, so far as possible, correct decisions are, first, a uniform training in handling troops. Every German officer, practically speaking, is educated in the same school and taught to adapt his action to the same principles. The school is that of the General Staff. The principles, few but comprehensive, are those laid down by the chief of staff; and they are disseminated through the army by his assistants, the officers of the General Staff, whom he himself has educated. Each army corps and each division has its own chief of the staff, all of them replicas of their teacher; and no general, so far as possible, is appointed even to the command of a brigade unless he is thoroughly acquainted with the official principles. Instruction is not necessarily given at Berlin. Every commander has not passed through the Kriegsakademie or served at headquarters. But at field exercises and manœuvres, at war games and staff rides, the official principles, especially

those concerned with 'orders,' are the groundwork of all criticism and the touchstone of every operation. The field exercises, too, are arranged so as to afford constant practice, under competent instructors, in solving the problems which present themselves in war. The second means is a systematic encouragement, from the first moment an officer joins his regiment, of the spirit of initiative, of independent judgment, and self-reliance. Each has his definite responsibilities, and superiors are forbidden, in the most stringent terms, to entrench upon the prerogatives of their subordinates. The third means is the enforcement of the strictest discipline, and the development of camaraderie in the highest sense. Despite the latitude that is accorded him, absolute and punctual obedience to the most trifling 'order' is exacted from the German officer; while devotion to duty, and self-sacrifice, exalted to the same level as personal honour, and inculcated as the loftiest sentiment by which the soldier can be inspired, are trusted to counteract the tendencies of personal ambition.

It may be remarked that Napoleon at St. Helena, in his criticisms of his marshals, frequently made use of the significant expression that so-and-so failed 'because he did not understand my system.' It is possible that Moltke, the real founder of the German system, took those words to heart. Be this as it may, he knew not only how to command an army, but how to teach an army; how to form skilled leaders, strategists, and tacticians, men who could plan, execute, and instruct; and in this respect he was far superior to Napoleon, or indeed to any general of modern times. In 1866 the system was not quite perfected; but in 1870 there were few German officers who were not thoroughly penetrated with the ideas of the chief of the staff; few who did not thoroughly understand how to interpret and how to issue 'orders' and 'instructions.'

The benefit to the state was enormous. It is true that the initiative of subordinates sometimes degenerated into reckless audacity, and critics have dilated on these rare instances with ludicrous persistence, forgetting the hundreds of others where it was exercised to the best purpose, forgetting the spirit of mutual confidence that permeated the whole army,

and forgetting, at the same time, the deplorable results of centralisation in the armies they overthrew. It is inconceivable that any student of war, comparing the conduct of the German, the French, and the Austrian generals, should retain even the shadow of a prejudice in favour of blind obedience and limited responsibility.

'To what,' asks the ablest commentator on the Franco-German war, 'did the Germans owe their uninterrupted triumph? What was the cause of the constant disasters of the French? What new system did the Germans put in practice, and what are the elements of success of which the French were bereft? The system is, so to speak, official and authoritative amongst the Germans. It is the initiative of the subordinate leaders. This quality, which multiplies the strength of an army, the Germans have succeeded in bringing to something near perfection. It is owing to this quality that, in the midst of varying events, the supreme command pursued its uninterrupted career of victory, and succeeded in controlling, almost without a check, the intricate machinery of the most powerful army that the nineteenth century produced. In executing the orders of the supreme command, the subordinate leaders not only did over and over again more than was demanded of them, but surpassed the highest expectations of their superiors, notably at Sedan. It often happened that the faults, more or less inevitable, of the higher authorities were repaired by their subordinates, who thus won for them victories which they had not always deserved. In a word, the Germans were indebted to the subordinate leaders that not a single favourable occasion throughout the whole campaign was allowed to escape unutilised. The French, on the other hand, never even suspected the existence of so powerful a factor; and it is for this reason that they met with disasters, even when victory, so to speak, belonged to them by every rule of war. The faults and omissions of the French subordinate leaders are to be attributed to the false conception of the rights and functions of command, to the ingrained habit of blind and inert obedience, based on a principle which allowed no exception, and acting as a law, absolute and immutable, in all degrees of the military hierarchy. To the

virile energy of the Germans they could oppose, nothing but impetuous courage. Compensation for the more powerful fire of the German artillery was found in the superior weapon of the French infantry. But to the intelligent, hardy, and even at times somewhat reckless, initiative of the German subordinate leaders, the French had nothing to oppose, in the grand as in the minor operations, but a deliberate inactivity, always awaiting an impulse from above. These were the real causes of the numerous reverses and the swift destruction of the valiant French army, and therein lies the true secret of German strength. Her foes of days to come will have to reckon seriously with this force, almost elementary in its manipulation, and prepare themselves in time to meet it. No well-organised army can afford to dispense with the initiative of the subordinate leaders, for it is the determining factor in modern war, and up to the present it has been monopolised by Germany.'

That the Prussian system should be imitated, and her army deprived of its monopoly of high efficiency, was naturally inevitable. Every European state has to-day its staff college, its intelligence department, its schools of instruction, and its courses of field manœuvres and field firing. But that the full import of the German system has been thoroughly realised is very doubtful. So far as the history of warfare since the fall of Paris can be regarded as evidence, the contrary appears to be the case. In many of the campaigns since 1870, brains and system can hardly be said to have played the leading part. Individual generals have made great names as strategists, as organisers, as leaders of men; but want of foresight, inadequate preparation, contempt of the enemy and ignorance of his strength, violation of great principles, and indifferent training, both of the staff and of the troops, have been too often apparent. It is possible that the same faults and deficiencies will be conspicuous in the twentieth century, unless a knowledge of the real nature of war is far more widely diffused than it is at present. It is not quite true that some terrible catastrophe is required to bring home to a nation the vast importance of military efficiency, and to make all men realise in what that efficiency consists. If Jena and Auerstadt made the Prussian

army of 1870, and Sedan the French army of 1900, it is to the writings of Mahan that Great Britain owes in large measure the reform of her naval deficiencies. His brilliant analysis of the nature of naval warfare, and his masterly elucidation of the great principles of success and failure, have proved as effective a tonic as the occupation of Berlin or the fall of Paris.

But before a new conception of war, such as is involved in Moltke's system, can take hold of the instincts of a people there are many obstacles to be overcome. Not the least is a very natural reluctance to admit that any foreign army is in any way better than their own, just as Oliver Goldsmith, the loyal citizen of London, believed that 'Nature never exhibited a more magnificent prospect than that seen from the top of Hampstead Hill.' But the chief are the traditional ideas that intellectual capacity is of far less value in the field than the military virtues, courage, endurance, and skill at arms, that the problems which confront the general are all to be solved by the exercise of ordinary common-sense, and that war is a matter of such simplicity that it is hardly worth serious study. In a lawyer, a doctor, an engineer, in the mates of an Atlantic liner, or the officers of a battleship, the public expects to find a mastery of their profession, a proved capacity for conducting it, and a knowledge that is up to date. Nor does the ordinary layman venture to interfere with these acknowledged specialists. As regards the military art it is far otherwise. Soldiers are not acknowledged as specialists. Few Anglo-Saxons are not secretly convinced that with some knowledge of drill they would be most formidable rivals to the officers of the German General Staff, and many of the fiercest critics of the professional soldier are in exactly the same case as the Austrians of 1866 and the French of 1870. They believe that they possess the military virtues, that they are fearless, cool, and resolute, and they flatter themselves that they are fitted with sufficient common-sense to enable them to decide wisely and promptly in critical moments. Nor is it to be denied, especially in a nation of sportsmen, whose familiarity with danger breeds energy and resolution, that so far they are perfectly right. They forget, however, that common-sense, to be a really useful guide to the

judgment, must be trained common-sense, fortified by knowledge and increased by practice, and they forget that encounters with the enemy are only incidents of a campaign. When they assume the form of pitched battles, they are undoubtedly the most important incidents. But unless the strategy is sound, unless the preliminary operations, such as the concentration on the frontier, the measures for protecting the communications, the arrangements for fortifying the bases, the marches, the reconnaissances, have been devised and executed in such manner as to enable the troops to meet the enemy under the most favourable conditions; and unless, when the victory has been won, the movements of the army are so directed as to reap the fruits thereof, battles, even if successful, are not likely to produce decisive results.

But with strategy—that is, the operations which lead up to battle, and those which follow battle—the ordinary military virtues are not directly concerned, or rather, are much less concerned than intellectual capacity and a wide knowledge of war. For instance, in the war of 1870, the headquarters were so far to the rear that neither Moltke nor his assistants saw a shot fired before the day of Gravelotte, the sixth great battle. It would seem, therefore, to have been perfectly immaterial whether the officers of the headquarters staff possessed a superabundance of the military virtues, or whether they were absolutely without them. Yet the skill with which they planned the preliminaries was the foundation of the victories. Had not the general scheme of operations been thoroughly sound, the judgment and initiative of the subordinate leaders would assuredly have gone astray. But Moltke committed no mistake. Long before war had been declared every possible preparation had been made. And these included much more than arrangements for rapid mobilisation, the assembly of superior numbers completely organised, and the establishment of magazines. The enemy's numbers, armaments, readiness, and efficiency had been submitted to a most searching examination. Every possible movement that might be made, however unlikely, had been foreseen, every possible danger that might arise, however remote, discussed and provided against.

The concentration on the frontier was so devised that not only were the troops placed in the best position for either invasion or defence, but the chance of even a small reverse was hardly possible. Moreover, when the campaign opened, although half a million of men had to be supplied and manœuvred in a hostile country, and, as each victory brought about a fresh situation, fourteen army corps, every one of them as large as the army with which Wellington fought the battle of Quatre Bras, had to be given a fresh direction, transferred to other roads and assigned a new objective; the French were never offered a real opening from first to last. It is true that the Germans were superior in numbers; but if it be borne in mind that exact information was but seldom forthcoming, that the movements of these huge masses depended on slight indications, and on inferences drawn from a knowledge of war, from a knowledge of the enemy's leaders, and of the influence on those leaders of French public opinion, it will be evident that the successful result was the fruit of a sustained intellectual effort of no ordinary kind.

The popular idea that war is a mere matter of brute force, redeemed only by valour and discipline, is responsible for a greater evil than the complacency of the amateur. It blinds both the people and its representatives to their bounden duties. War is something more than a mere outgrowth of politics. It is a political act, initiated and controlled by the Government, and it is an act of which the issues are far more momentous than any other. And yet no branch of political science is less studied among the Anglo-Saxon communities. That obstacles to a mastery of the subject are very numerous it is idle to deny. A youthful Hohenzollern can be taught by a Moltke; to train the sovereign people to a proper understanding of things military is a different matter. Moreover, it is not easy to find instructors. There is no standard work on war in the English language, no volume of permanent value which deals with the organisation, maintenance and employment of armies from the point of view of the statesman and the citizen. History, as taught at the present day, includes an immense variety of subjects, but there is one subject which it has

sedulously shunned, and that subject is the defence of empires. Hardly any well-known political writer, except Spenser Wilkinson, appears to have the least inkling that such knowledge should be part of the intellectual equipment of every educated man, and no great teaching body has yet endeavoured to supply the deficiency. So, in both Great Britain and the United States, organisation has been neglected, efficiency has been taken for granted, and the national resources have been either wasted or misused. Costly, ill-planned, and ill-conducted enterprises have been the inevitable result.

It is not pretended that if military history were thoroughly studied all statesmen would become Moltkes, or that every citizen would be competent to set squadrons in the field. War is above all a practical art, and the application of theory to practice is not to be taught at a university or to be learned by those who have never rubbed shoulders with the men in the ranks. But if war were more generally and more thoroughly studied, the importance of organisation, of training, of education, and of readiness would be more generally appreciated; abuses would no longer be regarded with lazy tolerance; efficiency would be something more than a political catchword, and soldiers would be given ample opportunities of becoming masters of every detail of their profession. Nor is this all. A nation that understood something about war would hardly suffer the fantastic tricks which have been played so often by the best-meaning statesmen. And statesmen themselves would realise that when war is afoot their interference is worse than useless; that preparation for defence, whether by the multiplication of roads, the construction of railways, of arsenals, dockyards, fortresses, is not the smallest of their duties; and, lastly, that so far as is possible diplomacy and strategy should keep step. Each one of these points is of far greater importance now than in the past. In the wars of the eighteenth century, English Cabinets and Dutch deputies could direct strategical operations without bringing ruin on their respective countries. The armies of Austria in 1792–95, controlled as they were by the Aulic Councils, were more formidable in the field than those of the French Republic. In the campaigns of 1854 and 1859 the

plans of Newcastle and Napoleon III. worked out to a successful issue; and if Lincoln and Stanton, his Secretary of War, imperilled the Union in 1862, they saw the downfall of the Southern Confederacy in 1865. But in every case amateur was pitted against amateur. The Dutch deputies were hardly less incapable of planning or approving a sound plan of campaign than Louis XIV. The Aulic Council was not more of a marplot than the Committee of Public Safety. Newcastle was not a worse strategist than the Tsar Nicholas I. Napoleon III. and his advisers were quite a match for the courtier generals at Vienna; while Lincoln and Stanton were not much more ignorant than Jefferson Davis. The amateur, however, can no longer expect the good fortune to be pitted against foes of a capacity no higher than his own. The operations of Continental armies will be directed by soldiers of experience whose training for war has been incessant, and who will have at their command troops in the highest state of efficiency and preparation. It is not difficult to imagine, under such conditions, with what condign punishment mistakes will be visited. Napoleon III., in 1859, committed as many blunders as he did in 1870. But the Austrians had no Moltke to direct them; their army corps were commanded by men who knew less of generalship than a Prussian major, and their armament was inferior. Had they been the Austrians of to-day, it is probable that the French and their allies would have been utterly defeated. And to come to more recent campaigns, while American officers have not hesitated to declare that if the Spaniards at Santiago had been Germans or French, the invasion would have ended in disastrous failure, it is impossible to doubt that had the Boers of 1899 possessed a staff of trained strategists, they would have shaken the British Empire to its foundations. The true test of direction of war is the number of mistakes. If they were numerous, although the enemy may not have been skilful enough to take advantage of them, the outlook for the future under the same direction, but against a more practised enemy, is anything but bright.

As regards preparation for defence, history supplies us with numerous illustrations. The most conspicuous, perhaps, is the

elaborate series of fortifications which were constructed by Vauban for the defence of France ; and there can be no question that Louis XIV., in erecting this mighty barrier against invasion, gave proof of statesmanlike foresight of no mean order. An instance less familiar, perhaps, but even more creditable to the brain which conceived it, was Wellington's preparation of Portugal in 1809–11. Not only did the impregnable stronghold of Torres Vedras, covering Lisbon, and securing for the sea-power an open door to the continent of Europe, rise as if by magic from the earth, but the whole theatre of war was so dealt with that the defending army could operate wherever opportunity might offer. No less than twenty supply depots were established on different lines of advance. Fortifications protected the principal magazines. Bridges were restored and roads improved. Waterways were opened up, and flotillas organised ; and three auxiliary bases were formed on the shores of the Atlantic. Again, the famous 'quadrilaterals' of Lombardy and Rumelia have more than fulfilled the purpose for which they were constructed ; while both Austria and Turkey owe much to the fortresses which so long protected their vulnerable points. Nor has the neglect of preparation failed to exert a powerful effect. Moltke has told us that the railway system of Germany before 1870 had been developed without regard to strategical considerations. Yet the fact remains that it was far better adapted both for offence and defence than those of Austria and France ; and, at the same time, it can hardly be denied that the unprovided state of the great French fortresses exercised an evil influence on French strategy. Both Metz and Strasburg were so far from forming strong pivots of manœuvres, and thus aiding the operations of the field armies, that they required those armies for their protection ; and the retreat on Metz, which removed Bazaine's army from the direct road to Paris and placed it out of touch with its supports, was mainly due to the unfinished outworks and deficient armament of the virgin city. Since 1870 it has been recognised that preparation of the theatre of war is one of the first duties of a Government. Every frontier of continental Europe is covered by a chain of entrenched camps. The great arsenals are amply

fortified and strongly garrisoned. Strategy has as much to say to new railways as trade; and the lines of communication, whether by water or by land, are adequately protected from all hostile enterprises. It is to be recognised that the amount of preparation must vary with the extent of the frontier and with the character of the foe beyond. For example, to make the vast boundaries of the British Empire as secure as the eastern marches of France would be a financial impossibility and a military folly. Yet this does not imply that questions of defence may be postponed until war is imminent. Plevna has demonstrated, indeed, that hastily constructed earthworks may be more useful than the most formidable citadel. But it was only the stupidity of the enemy that allowed Plevna to become impregnable.

We now come to the third point, the importance of close concert between strategy and diplomacy. On the continent of Europe they can easily keep pace, for the theatre of war is always within easy reach. But when the ocean intervenes between two hostile states, it is undoubtedly difficult to time an ultimatum so that a sufficient armed force shall be at hand to enforce it, and it has been said in high places that it is practically impossible. The expedition to Copenhagen in 1807, when the British ultimatum was presented by an army of 27,000 men carried on 300 transports, would appear to traverse this statement. But at the beginning of the twentieth century an army and a fleet of such magnitude could neither be assembled nor despatched without the whole world being cognisant.

It is thus perfectly true that an appreciable period of time must elapse between the breaking off of negotiations and the appearance on the scene of an invading army. Events may march so fast that the statesman's hand may be forced before the army has embarked. But because a powerful blow cannot at once be struck, it by no means follows that the delivery or the receipt of an ultimatum should at once produce a dangerous situation. Dewey's brilliant victory at Manila lost the greater part of its effect because the United States Government was unable to follow up the blow by landing a sufficient force.

Exactly the same thing occurred in Egypt in 1882. The only results of the bombardment of Alexandria were the destruction of the city, the massacre of the Christian inhabitants, the encouragement of the rebels, who, when the ships drew off, came to the natural conclusion that Great Britain was powerless on land. Again, in 1899, the invading Boers found the frontiers unfortified and their march opposed by an inadequate force. It is essential, then, that when hostilities across the sea are to be apprehended, the most careful precautions should be taken to ward off the chance of an initial disaster. And such precautions are always possible. It is hardly conceivable, for instance, that a great maritime Power, with Cyprus as a place d'armes, could not have placed enough transports behind the fleet to hold a sufficient garrison for Alexandria, and thus have saved the city from destruction. Nor in the case of a distant province being threatened is there the smallest reason that the garrison should be exposed to the risk of a reverse before it is reinforced. It may even be necessary to abandon territory. It will certainly be necessary to construct strong places, to secure the lines of communication, to establish ample magazines, to organise local forces, to assemble a fleet of transports, and to keep a large body of troops ready to embark at a moment's notice. But there is no reason, except that of expense, why all this should not be done directly it becomes clear that war is probable, and why it should not be done without attracting public attention. In this way strategy may easily keep pace with diplomacy; and all that is wanted is the exercise of ordinary foresight, a careful study of the theatre of war, a knowledge of the enemy's resources, and a resolute determination, despite some temporary inconvenience and the outcry of a thoughtless public, to give the enemy no chance of claiming first blood.

The Franco-German war supplies a striking example. Moltke's original intention was to assemble the German armies on the western frontier. The French, inferior in numbers, and but half prepared, would, he thought, probably assemble as far back as the Moselle. But, as so often happens in war, the enemy did what he was least expected to do.

Hastily leaving their garrisons, the French regiments rushed forward to the Saar. The excitement in Germany was great; and even soldiers of repute, although the mobilisation of the army was still unfinished, demanded that such troops as were available should be hurried forward to protect the rich provinces which lie between the Saar and Rhine. But the chief of the staff became as deaf as he was silent. Not a single company was despatched to reinforce the slender garrisons of the frontier towns; and those garrisons were ordered to retire, destroying railways and removing rolling-stock, directly the enemy should cross the boundary. Moltke's foresight had embraced every possible contingency. The action of the French, improbable as it was deemed, had already been provided against; and, in accordance with time-tables drawn up long beforehand, the German army was detrained on the Rhine instead of on the Saar. Ninety miles of German territory were thus laid open to the enemy; but the temporary surrender of the border provinces, in the opinion of the great strategist, was a very minor evil compared with the disasters, military and political, that would have resulted from an attempt to hold them.

It is hardly necessary to observe that no civilian minister, however deeply he might have studied the art of war, could be expected to solve for himself the strategic problems which come before him. In default of practical knowledge, it would be as impossible for him to decide where garrisons should be stationed, what fortifications were necessary, what roads should be constructed, or how the lines of communication should be projected, as to frame a plan of campaign for the invasion of a hostile state. His foresight, his prevision of the accidents inevitable in war, would necessarily be far inferior to those of men who had spent their lives in applying strategical principles to concrete cases; and it is exceedingly unlikely that he would be as prolific of strategical expedients as those familiar with their employment. Nevertheless, although he would be more or less bound by expert advice, and although he might be aware that the attempt to control military operations, even so far as regards the preliminaries of a campaign, is a most dangerous proceeding, yet a knowledge of war could hardly

fail to serve him in good stead. Arnold, in his 'Lectures on Modern History,' puts the matter clearly: 'There must be a point up to which an unprofessional judgment on a professional subject may not only be competent, but of high authority, although beyond that point it cannot venture without presumption and folly. The distinction seems to lie originally in the difference between the power of doing a thing and that of perceiving whether it is well done or not. "He who lives in the house," says Aristotle, "is a better judge of its being a good or bad one than the builder of it. He can tell not only whether the house is good or bad, but wherein its defects consist; he can say to the builder, 'This chimney smokes, or has a bad draught'; or 'This arrangement of the rooms is inconvenient,' and yet he may be quite unable to cure the chimney, or to draw out a plan for his rooms which should suit him better. Nay, sometimes he can even see where the fault is which has caused the mischief, and yet he may not practically know how to remedy it." Following up this principle, it would appear that what we understand least in the profession of another is the detail of his practice. We may appreciate his object, we may see where he has missed it, or where he is pursuing it ill; nay, may understand generally the method of setting about it, but we fail in the minute details. . . . But in proportion as we recede from those details to more general points, first, as to what is generally called strategy, that is to say the directing the movements of an army with a view to the accomplishment of the object of the campaign, in that proportion general knowledge and power of mind come into play, and an unprofessional person may, without blame, speak or write on military subjects, and may judge of them sufficiently.'

Applying this wise rule to statecraft, the point where civilian control of military operations becomes presumptuous, as well as the extent of that control, may be easily defined. In the first place, to frame a sound strategical plan, whether for defence or invasion, requires not only an intimate acquaintance with innumerable details of which only a professional soldier can really judge, such as methods of supply and

transport, the use of fortifications, the effects of climate, the maintenance of the lines of communication, the value of positions, the management of marches, the *moral*, armament, organisation, tactics and resources of the opposing forces, but an intimate acquaintance with the principles and stratagems of war. It is here that the amateur strategist fails. He may have read enough to give him a good knowledge of principles, but he has no knowledge of the practical difficulties of war, and his criticism, as a general rule, is consequently of little value. All war is simple, but the simple is most difficult, and how difficult only those who have made it, who have witnessed with their own eyes the turmoil, the confusion, the friction, which, even in the best armies, attend the most ordinary operation, are in a position to understand. Even a theoretical acquaintance, derived from historical study of the practical difficulties, is insufficient. Unless he who prepares a strategical plan has before his mind's eye a clear picture of all military operations, of marching, quartering, supply, entraining, and detraining, embarkation, and debarkation, and a personal knowledge of the difficulties which attend on war, his work will be of little value. It is essential too that he should have a thorough knowledge of both officers and men, of the peculiar characteristics of the army, and of the system on which it works, of its strong points and its weak. A German, suddenly placed in command of British soldiers, would be much at sea, and *vice versa*. Every army has an individuality of its own. It is a living organism of a very sensitive temper, and it can neither be properly controlled nor efficiently directed except by those who are in full sympathy with its every impulse.

It would appear, then, that while a statesman may be competent to appreciate the general principles of the projects of operations laid before him, he should never attempt to frame a project for himself. Still less, when once he has approved of a plan of campaign, should he attempt to limit the number of troops to be employed, or to assign the position of the necessary detachments. Nevertheless, a knowledge of war may still be exceedingly useful to him. A minister of war cannot divest himself of his responsibility for the conduct of military opera-

tions. In the first place, he is directly responsible for plans of campaign to meet every possible contingency being worked out in time of peace. In the second place, he is directly responsible for the advice on which he acts being the best procurable. It is essential, therefore, that he should be capable of forming an independent opinion on the merits of the military projects which may be submitted to him, and also on the merits of those who have to execute them. Pitt knew enough of war and men to select Wolfe for the command in Canada. Canning and Castlereagh, in spite of the opposition of the King, sent Wellington, one of the youngest of the lieutenant-generals, to hold Portugal against the French. The French Directory had sufficient sense to accept Napoleon's project for the campaign of Italy in 1796. In the third place, strategy cannot move altogether untrammelled by politics and finance.

But political and financial considerations may not present themselves in quite the same light to the soldier as to the statesman, and the latter is bound to make certain that they have received due attention. If, however, modifications are necessary, they should be made before the plan of campaign is finally approved; and in any case the purely military considerations should be most carefully weighed. It should be remembered that an unfavourable political situation is best redeemed by a decisive victory, while a reverse will do more to shake confidence in the Government than even the temporary surrender of some portion of the national domains. 'Be sure before striking' and *reculer pour mieux sauter* are both admirable maxims; but their practical application requires a thorough appreciation of the true principles of war, and a very large degree of moral courage, both in the soldier who suggests and in the statesman who approves. If, however, the soldier and the statesman are supported by an enlightened public, sufficiently acquainted with war to realise that patience is to be preferred to precipitation; that retreat, though inglorious, is not necessarily humiliating, their task is very considerably lightened.

Nothing is more significant than a comparison between the Paris press in 1870 and the Confederate press in 1864. In the one case, even after the disastrous results of the first

encounters had proved the superior strength and readiness of the enemy, the French people, with all the heat of presumptuous ignorance, cried out for more battles, for an immediate offensive, for a desperate defence of the frontier provinces. So fierce was their clamour that both the generals and the Government hesitated, until it was too late, to advise the retreat of Bazaine's army; and, when that army had been cut off at Metz, the pressure of public opinion was so great that the last reserve of France was despatched to Sedan on one of the maddest enterprises ever undertaken by a civilised state. In 1864, on the other hand, while Lee in Virginia and Johnston in the West were retreating from position to position, and the huge hosts of the Union were gradually converging on the very heart of the Confederacy, the Southern press, aware that every backward step made the Federal task more difficult, had nothing but praise for the caution which controlled the movements of their armies. But the Southern press, in three crowded years of conflict, had learned something of war.

In 1866 and 1870 the German press was so carefully muzzled that, even had there been occasion, it could have done nothing to prejudice public opinion. Thus both the sovereign and the generals were backed by the popular support they so richly merited; but, it may be remarked, the relations between the army and the Government were characterised by a harmony which has been seldom seen. The old King, in his dual capacity as head of the state and commander-in-chief, had the last word to say, not only in the selection of the superior officers, but in approving every important operation. With an adviser like Moltke at his elbow, it might appear that these were mere matters of form. Moltke, however, assures us that the King was by no means a figurehead. Although most careful not to assert his authority in a way that would embarrass his chief of staff, and always ready to yield his own judgment to sound reasons, he expressed, nevertheless, a perfectly independent opinion on every proposal placed before him, and on very many occasions made most useful suggestions. At the same time, while systematically refraining from all interference after operations had begun, he never permitted

military considerations to override the demands of policy. In 1866, when it was manifestly of the first importance, from a military point of view, that the Prussian army should be concentrated in a position which would enable it to cross the border immediately war was declared, the political situation was so strained that it was even more important to prevent the enemy from setting foot on any single point of Prussian territory. The army, in consequence, was dispersed instead of being concentrated, and the ultimate offensive became a difficult and hazardous operation. It is true that the King was an able and experienced soldier. Nevertheless, the wise restraint he displayed in the course of two great campaigns, and the skill with which he adjusted conflicting factors, form an admirable example of judicious statesmanship. And such statesmanship is not merely a valuable aid to the military chiefs, but it is imperatively demanded by the nature of great wars. Campaigns are not likely to be prolonged. Space has been annihilated by steam ; and it was space that was the real cause of such weary struggles as the war in the Peninsula or that of Secession in America. Troops are so easily transported and fed by means of railways and steamers, and organisation is so perfect, that, as a general rule, far larger numbers will be assembled for the initial encounters than heretofore. There will be more in front and fewer in rear ; and the first battles have assumed a new importance. In fact, unless one side has been completely surprised, and merely fights to gain time, they may be as decisive of the war as Jena, Eckmuhl, or Waterloo. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that when once the plan of campaign has been approved, the military chiefs upon the spot should be given an absolutely free hand.

The duration of a campaign is largely affected by the deadly properties of modern firearms. It is true that the losses in battle are relatively less than in the days of brown Bess and the smoothbore cannon, and almost insignificant when compared with the fearful carnage wrought by sword and spear. The reason is simple. A battlefield in the old days, except at close quarters, was a comparatively safe locality, and the greater part of the troops engaged were seldom exposed for a long time

together to a hot and continuous fire. To-day death has a far wider range, and the strain on the nerves is consequently far more severe. Demoralisation, therefore, sets in at an earlier period, and it is more complete. When troops once realise their inferiority, they can no longer be depended on. If attacking, they refuse to advance; if defending, they abandon all hope of resistance. It is not the losses they have actually suffered, but those that they expect to suffer, that affect them. The ordeal of facing the hail of modern fire tells so heavily on ordinary flesh and blood that those who have been hotly engaged, if casualties have been very numerous, will seldom be brought to fight again, except on the defensive, the same day, or even the same month. There is no bringing up men again and again to the attack, as in the days of Napoleon; and unless discipline and national spirit are of superior quality, unless even the private soldier is animated by something higher than the mere habit of mechanical obedience, panic, shirking, and wholesale surrender will be the ordinary features of a campaign.

These phenomena made themselves apparent, though in a less degree, as long ago as the War of Secession, when the weapon of the infantry was the muzzle-loading rifle, firing at most two rounds a minute, and when the projectile of the artillery was hardly more destructive than the stone shot of Mons Meg. With the magazine rifle, machine guns, shrapnel, and high explosives, they have become more pronounced than even at Vionville or Plevna. 'The retreat of the 38th [Prussian] Brigade,' writes Captain Hoenig, an eyewitness of the former battle, 'forms the most awful drama of the great war. It had lost 53 per cent. of its strength, and the proportion of killed to wounded was as 3 to 4. Strong men collapsed inanimate. . . . I saw men cry like children; others fell prone without a sound; in most the need of water thrust forth all other instincts; the body demanded its rights. "Water, water" was the only intelligible cry that broke from those moving phantoms. The enemy's lead poured like hail upon the wretched remnant of the brigade; yet they moved only slowly to the rear, their heads bent in utter weariness; their features distorted under the thick dust that had gathered on faces dripping with sweat. The

strain was beyond endurance. The soldier was no longer a receptive being; he was oblivious of everything, great or small. His comrades or his superiors he no longer recognised; and yet he was the same man who, but a short time before, had marched across the battlefield shouting his marching chorus. A few active squadrons, and not a man would have escaped! Only he who has seen men in such circumstances, and observed their bearing, knows the dreadful imprint that their features leave upon the memory. Madness is there, the madness that arises from bodily exhaustion combined with the most abject terror. . . . I do not shrink,' he adds, 'from confessing that the fire of Mars-la-Tour affected my nerves for months.'

If such are the results of ill-success, a whole army might be reduced to the condition of the 38th Brigade in the first month of the campaign, and it is thus perfectly clear that some small mistake in conduct, some trifling deficiency in preparation, an ill-conceived order, or a few hours' delay in bringing up a reinforcement, may have the most terrible consequences. That mistakes can be wholly avoided is to expect too much. But the state has every right to demand that to make preparations complete, to ensure skilful leading, close co-operation, and resolute action, neither by statesman nor soldier should thought labour, or expense be spared.

The importance, nay the necessity, that the people, as a governing body, should keep as watchful an eye on its armed forces and the national defences as on diplomacy or legislation is fully realised, naturally enough, only by those nations whose instincts of self-preservation, by reason of the configuration of their frontiers or their political situation, are strongly developed. So remote is the prospect that either British or American soldiers may suddenly be called upon to confront the trained hosts of Continental Europe, that the efficiency of the army has comparatively little interest for the nation at large. Yet even to these maritime empires an efficient army is of the first necessity. Their land frontiers are vulnerable. They may have to deal with rebellion, and a navy is not all powerful, even for the defence of coasts and commerce, It can protect, but it cannot destroy. Without the help of an army, it can neither complete

the ruin of the enemy's fleet nor prevent its resuscitation. It can ward off attack, but counter-attack is beyond its scope. Without the help of an army it can hardly force a hostile Power to ask for terms. Exhaustion is the object of its warfare; but exhaustion, unless accelerated by crushing blows, is an exceedingly slow process. In the spring of 1861 the blockade was established along the coasts of the Southern Confederacy, and maintained with increasing stringency from month to month. Yet it was not till the spring of 1865 that the colours of the Union floated from the capitol of Richmond, and it was the army which placed them there.

A state, then, which should rely on naval strength alone could look forward to no other than a protracted war, and a protracted war between two great Powers is antagonistic to the interests of the civilised world. With the nations armed to the teeth, and dominated to a greater or smaller extent by a militant spirit; with commerce and finance dependent for health and security on universal peace, foreign intervention is a mere question of time. Nor would public opinion, either in Great Britain or America, be content with a purely defensive policy, even if such policy were practicable. Putting aside the tedium and the dangers of an interminable campaign, the national pride would never be brought to confess that it was incapable of the same resolute effort as much smaller communities. 'An army, and a strong army,' would be the general cry. Nor would such an army be difficult to create. Enormous numbers would not be needed. An army supported by an invincible navy possesses a strength which is out of all proportion to its size. Even to those who rely on the big battalions and huge fortresses, the amphibious power of a great maritime state, if intelligently directed, may be a most formidable menace: while to the state itself it is an extraordinary security.

The history of Great Britain is one long illustration. Captain Mahan points out that there are always dominant positions, outside the frontiers of a maritime state, which, in the interests of commerce, as well as of supremacy at sea, should never be allowed to pass into the possession of a powerful neighbour. Great Britain, always dependent for her prosperity on narrow

seas, has long been familiar with the importance of the positions that command these waterways. In one respect at least her policy has been consistent. She has spared no effort to secure such positions for herself, or, if that has been impracticable, at least to draw their teeth. Gibraltar, Malta, St. Lucia, Aden, Egypt, Cyprus are conspicuous instances; but above all stands Antwerp. In perhaps the most original passage of Alison's monumental work the constant influence of Antwerp on the destinies of the United Kingdom is vividly portrayed. 'Nature has framed the Scheldt to be the rival of the Thames. Flowing through a country excelling even the midland counties of England in wealth and resources, adjoining cities equal to any in Europe in arts and commerce; the artery at once of Flanders and Holland, of Brabant and Luxembourg, it is fitted to be the great organ of communication between the fertile fields and rich manufacturing towns of the Low Countries and other maritime states of the world.' Antwerp, moreover, the key of the great estuary, is eminently adapted for the establishment of a vast naval arsenal, such as it became under Philip II. of Spain and again under the First Napoleon. 'It is the point,' continues the historian, 'from which in every age the independence of these kingdoms has been seriously menaced. Sensible of her danger, it had been the fixed policy of Great Britain for centuries to prevent this formidable outwork from falling into the hands of her enemies, and the best days of her history are chiefly occupied with the struggle to ward off such a disaster.' In ascribing, however, every great war in which Great Britain has been engaged to this cause alone he has gone too far. The security of India has been a motive of equal strength. Nevertheless, it was to protect Antwerp from the French that Charles II. sided with the Dutch in 1670; that Anne declared war on Louis XIV. in 1704; that Chatham supported Prussia in 1742; that Pitt, fifty years later, took up arms against the Revolution.

The trophies of the British army in the great war with France were characteristic of the amphibious power. The troops took more battleships than colours, and almost as many naval arsenals as land fortresses. Many were the blows they

struck at the maritime strength of France and her allies; but had the expedition which landed on the Isle of Walcheren in 1809 been as vigorously conducted as it was wisely conceived, it would have hit Napoleon far harder than even the seizure of the Danish fleet at Copenhagen. The great dockyard that the Emperor had constructed on the Scheldt held the nucleus of a powerful fleet. Eight line-of-battle ships and ten frigates lay in mid-channel. Twenty vessels of different classes were on the slips, and in the magazines and storehouses had been accumulated sufficient material to equip all these and twenty more. The destruction of Antwerp—and for a full week it was at Lord Chatham's mercy—would have freed scores of British frigates to protect British commerce; Wellington, in his great campaign of 1813, would not have had to complain that, for the first time, the communication by sea of a British army was insecure; the Americans, in the war which broke out in 1812, would have been more vigorously opposed; and Napoleon, who, while Antwerp was his, never altogether abandoned hope of overmastering Great Britain on her own element, might, on his own confession, have relinquished the useless struggle with the great sea Power. The expedition failed, and failed disastrously. But for all that, fulfilling as it did the great maxim that the naval strength of the enemy should be the first objective of the forces of the maritime power, both by land and sea, it was a strategical stroke of the highest order.

The predominant part played by the army under Wellington in Spain and Belgium has tended to obscure the principle that governed its employment in the war of 1793–1815. The army, in the opinion of the country, was first and foremost the auxiliary of the fleet; and only when the naval strength of the enemy had been destroyed was it used in the ordinary manner, i.e. in the invasion of the hostile territory and in lending aid to the forces of confederate Powers. Events proved that these principles were absolutely sound. It was not in the narrow seas alone that the army rendered good service to the navy. Depriving France of her colonies, occupying her ports in foreign waters, ousting her from commanding posts along the trade routes, it contributed not only to her exhaustion, but to the

protection of British commerce and to the permanent establishment of maritime supremacy. Few of these operations are of sufficient magnitude to attract much notice from the ordinary historian, yet it is impossible to overrate their effect. To the possession of the dominant positions that were captured by the army, Great Britain, in no small degree, is indebted for the present security of her vast dominions. The keynote of the fierce struggle with the French Empire was the possession of India. Before he became First Consul, Napoleon had realised that India was the throne of Asia; that whoever should sit on that throne, master of the commerce of the East, of the richest and most natural market for the products of the West, and of the hardiest and most enlightened nations of the golden hemisphere, would be master of more than half the globe. But his prescience was not surer than the instinct of the British people. Vague and shadowy indeed were their dreams of empire, yet the presentiment of future greatness, based on the foothold they had already gained in Hindustan, seems always to have controlled the national policy. They knew as well as Napoleon that Malta and Egypt, to use his own phrase, were merely the outworks of their stronghold in the East; and that if those outworks fell into the hands of France, a great army of Mahommedans, led by French generals, stiffened by a French army corps, and gathering impetus from the accession of every tribe it passed through, might march unopposed across the Indus. So, from first to last, the least threat against Egypt and Malta sufficed to awaken their apprehensions; and in their knowledge that India was the ultimate objective of all his schemes is to be found the explanation of the stubbornness with which they fought Napoleon. It is not to be denied that in thwarting the ambition of their mighty rival, or perhaps in furthering their own, the navy was the chief instrument; but in thrusting the French from Egypt, in adding Ceylon, Mauritius, and Cape Colony to the outworks, the army, small as it was then compared with the great hosts of the Continent, did much both for the making and for the security of the British Empire.

But the scope of the military operations of a maritime state is by no means limited to the capture of colonies, naval arsenals

and coaling-stations. Timely diversions, by attracting a large portion of the enemy's fighting strength on the mainland, may give valuable aid to the armies of an ally. The Peninsular War is a conspicuous example. According to Napoleon, the necessity of maintaining his grip on Spain deprived him of 180,000 good soldiers during the disastrous campaign of 1813; and those soldiers, who would have made Dresden a decisive instead of a barren victory, were held fast by Wellington. Again, it was the news of Vittoria that made it useless for the Emperor to propose terms of peace, and so escape from the coils that strangled him at Leipzig.

Nor is the reinforcement supplied by a small army based upon the sea to be despised. In 1793 a British contingent, under the Duke of York, formed part of the allied forces which, had the British Government forborne to interfere, would in all probability have captured Paris. Twenty-two years later, under wiser auspices, another contingent, although numbering no more than 30,000 men, took a decisive part in the war of nations, and the blunders of the older generation were more than repaired at Waterloo. But the strength of the amphibious Power has been even more effectively displayed than in the campaign of 1815. Intervention at the most critical period of a war has produced greater results than the provision of a contingent at the outset. In 1782 the disembarkation of a French army on the Virginia Peninsula established the independence of the United States; and in 1878, when the Russian invaders were already in sight of Constantinople, the arrival of the British fleet in the Dardanelles, following the mobilisation of an expeditionary force, at once arrested their further progress. Had the British Cabinet of 1807 realised the preponderating strength which even a small army, if rightly used, draws from the command of the sea, the campaign of Eylau would in all probability have been as disastrous to Napoleon as that of Leipzig. The presence of 20,000 men at the great battle would have surely turned the scale in favour of the Allies. Yet, although the men were available, although a few months later 27,000 were assembled in the Baltic for the coercion of Denmark, his Majesty's

ministers, forgetful of Marlborough's glories, were so imbued with the idea that the British army was too insignificant to take part in a Continental war, that the opportunity was let slip. It is a sufficiently remarkable fact that the successive Governments of that era, although they realised very clearly that the first duty of the army was to support the operations and complete the triumph of the navy, never seemed to have grasped the principles which should have controlled its use when the command of the sea had been attained. The march of the Allies on Paris in 1793 was brought to a standstill because the British Cabinet considered that the contingent would be better employed in besieging Dunkirk. After the failure of the expedition under Sir John Moore to achieve the impossible, and, in conjunction with the Spaniards, to drive the French from the Peninsula, the ministry abandoned all idea of intervention on the main theatre, although, as we have seen, had such intervention been well timed, it might easily have changed the current of events. It is true that when the main theatre is occupied by huge armies, as was the case during the whole of the Napoleonic conflict, the value of a comparatively small force, however sudden its appearance, is by no means easily realised. For instance, it would seem at first sight that a British contingent of 100,000 men would be almost lost amid the millions that would take part in the decisive conflicts of a European war. It should be remembered, however, that with enormous masses of men the difficulties of supply are very great. Steam has done much to lighten them, and the numbers at the point of collision will be far greater than it was possible to assemble in the days of Napoleon. Nevertheless, the lines of communication, especially railways, will require more men to guard them than heretofore, for they are more vulnerable. The longer, therefore, the lines of communication, the smaller the numbers on the field of battle. Moreover, the great hosts of the Continent, not only for convenience of supply, but for convenience of manœuvre, will deploy several armies on a broad front. At some one point, then, a reinforcement of even one or two army corps might turn the scale.

The objections, however, to intervention of this character are numerous. Between allied armies, especially if one is far larger than the other, there is certain to be friction, as was the case in the Crimea; and the question of supply is not easily settled. If the decisive point is near the coast, as in the campaign of Eylau, the army of the maritime Power, possessing its own base, can render effective aid without embarrassment either to itself or its ally; but, under all other conditions, independent operations of a secondary nature are distinctly to be preferred. Such was clearly the opinion of the British ministries during the war with France. They recognised that by giving vitality and backbone to popular risings even a small army might create useful diversions. But their idea of a diversion was a series of isolated efforts, made at far distant points; and even so late as 1813 they were oblivious of the self-evident facts that for a diversion to be really effective it must be made in such strength as to constitute a serious threat, and that it should be directed against some vital point.

Fortunately for Europe, Wellington foresaw that the permanent occupation of Portugal, and the presence of a British army in close proximity to the southern frontier of France, would be a menace which it would be impossible for Napoleon to disregard. Yet with what difficulty he induced the Government to adopt his views, and how lukewarm was their support, is exposed in the many volumes of his despatches. In all history there are few more glaring instances of incompetent statesmanship than the proposal of the Cabinet of 1813, at the moment when Wellington was contemplating the campaign that was to expel the French from Spain, and was asking for more men, more money, and more material, to detach a large force in the vague hope of exciting a revolution in southern Italy.

Whether the improvement in communications, as well as the increase in the size of armies, has not greatly weakened the value of diversions on the mainland, it is difficult to say. Railways may enable the defender to concentrate his forces so rapidly that even the landing may be opposed, and with

the enormous numbers at his command he may well be able to spare a considerable force from the main theatre. It is possible to conceive that a small army, even if it completed its embarkation, might find itself shut up in an entrenched position by a force little larger than itself. If, however, the diversion were made at a crisis of the campaign, the sudden appearance of a new army might be decisive of the war. Otherwise, the army would probably do more good if it refrained from landing and confined itself to threats. So long as it was hidden by the horizon, it would be invested with the terrors of the unknown. The enemy's knowledge that at any moment a well-equipped force, supported by a powerful fleet, might suddenly descend upon some prosperous port or important arsenal, would compel him to maintain large garrisons along the whole seaboard. The strength of these garrisons, in all probability, would be much larger in the aggregate than the force which menaced them, and the latter would thus exercise a far greater disintegrating effect on the enemy's armed strength than by adding a few thousand men to the hosts of its ally. On theatres of war which are only thinly populated or half civilised, a descent from the sea might easily produce a complete change in the situation. The occupation of Plevna, in close proximity to the Russian line of communications and to the single bridge across the Danube, brought the Russian advance through Bulgaria to a sudden stop, and relieved all pressure on Turkey proper. The deadlock which ensued is suggestive. Let us suppose that the invaders' line of communications had been a railway, and Plevna situated near the coast. Supplied from the sea, with unlimited facilities for reinforcement, Osman's ring of earthworks would have been absolutely impregnable; and had the ring been pushed so far inland as to secure scope for offensive action, the Russians, in all human probability, would never have crossed the Balkans. It is perfectly possible, then, that if an army lands within reach of a precarious line of communications it may compel the enemy, although far superior in numbers, to renounce all enterprises against distant points.

Railways in war are good servants but bad masters. In

some respects they are far superior to a network of high roads. Two trains will supply the daily needs of 100,000 men several hundred miles distant from their base. But the road-bed is easily destroyed; the convoy system is impracticable, and the regular course of traffic is susceptible to the slightest threat. So, when railways become the principal factors, as when an army finds itself dependent on a long and exposed line, a powerful aggressive combination becomes a matter of the utmost difficulty. The whole attention of the commander will be given to the security of his supplies, and even if he is not thrown on the defensive by the enemy's activity, his liberty of action will be exceedingly circumscribed.

The relative values of the different kinds of communication have a most important bearing on the art of war. A great waterway, such as the Nile, the Mississippi, the Danube, or the Ganges, is safer and surer than a railway. But railways are far more numerous than navigable rivers, and a series of parallel lines is thus a better means of supplying a large army. But neither railways nor waterways as lines of supply or of operation are to be compared with the sea. Before the War of 1870, for instance, a study of the French railway system enabled Moltke to forecast, with absolute accuracy, the direction of Napoleon's advance, the distribution of his forces, and the extent of front that they would occupy. In a war, therefore, between two Continental Powers, the staff of either side would have no difficulty in determining the line of attack; the locality for concentration would be at once made clear; and, as the carrying capacity of all railways is well known, the numbers that would be encountered at any one point along the front might be easily calculated.

But if the enemy's army, supported by a powerful fleet, were to advance across blue water, the case would be very different. Its movements would be veiled in the most complete secrecy. It would be impossible to do more than guess at its objective. It might strike at any point along hundreds of miles of coast, or it might shift from one point to another, perhaps far distant, in absolute security; it could bewilder the enemy with feints, and cause him to disperse

his forces over the whole seaboard. Surprise and freedom of movement are pre-eminently the weapons of the Power that commands the sea. Witness the War of Secession. McClellan, in 1862, by the adroit transfer of 120,000 men down the reaches of the Chesapeake to the Virginia Peninsula, had Richmond at his mercy. Grant in 1864, by continually changing his line of communication from one river to another, made more progress in a month than his predecessors had done in two years. Sherman's great march across Georgia would have been impossible had not a Federal fleet been ready to receive him when he reached the Atlantic; and, throughout the war, the knowledge that at any moment a vast fleet of transports might appear off any one of the ports on their enormous seaboard prevented the Confederates, notwithstanding that the garrisons were reduced to a most dangerous extent, from massing their full strength for a decisive effort.

The power of striking like a 'a bolt from the blue' is of the very greatest value in war. Surprise was the foundation of almost all the grand strategical combinations of the past, as it will be of those to come. The first thought, and the last, of the great general is to outwit his adversary, and to strike where he is least expected. And the measures he adopts to accomplish his purpose are not easily divined. What soldier in Europe anticipated Marlborough's march to the Danube and Blenheim field? What other brain besides Napoleon's dreamt of the passage of the Alps before Marengo? Was there a single general of Prussia before Jena who foresaw that the French would march north from the Bavarian frontier, uncovering the roads to the Rhine, and risking utter destruction in case of defeat? Who believed in the early June of 1815 that an army 130,000 strong would dare to invade a country defended by two armies that mustered together over 200,000 unbeaten soldiers? To what Federal soldier did it occur, on the morning of Chancellorsville, that Lee, confronted by 90,000 Northerners, would detach the half of his own small force of 50,000 to attack his enemy in flank and rear? The very course which appeared to ordinary minds so beset by difficulties and dangers as to be outside the pale of practical strategy has, over and over again, been that which led

to decisive victory; and if there is one lesson more valuable than another as regards national defence, it is that preparation cannot be too careful, or precautions overdone. Overwhelming numbers, adequately trained, commanded, and equipped, are the only means of ensuring absolute security. But a numerical preponderance, either by land or sea, over all possible hostile combinations, is unattainable, and in default the only sound policy is to take timely and ample precautions against all enterprises which are even remotely possible. There is nothing more to be dreaded in war than the combined labours of a thoroughly well-trained general staff, except the intellect and audacity of a great strategist. The ordinary mind, even if it does not shrink from great danger, sees no way of surmounting great difficulties; and any operation which involves both vast dangers and vast difficulties it scoffs at as chimerical. The heaven-born strategist, on the other hand, 'takes no counsel of his fears.' Knowing that success is seldom to be won without incurring risks, he is always greatly daring; and by the skill with which he overcomes all obstacles, and even uses them, as Hannibal and Napoleon did the Alps, and as some great captain of the future may use the sea, to further his purpose and surprise his adversary, he shows his superiority to the common herd. It is repeated *ad nauseam* that in consequence of the vastly improved means of transmitting information, surprise on a large scale is no longer to be feared. It should be remembered, however, that the means of concentrating troops and ships are far speedier than of old; that false information can be far more readily distributed; and also, that if there is one thing more certain than another, it is that the great strategist, surprise being still the most deadly of all weapons, will devote the whole force of his intellect to the problem of bringing it about.

Nor can it be disguised that amphibious power is a far more terrible weapon now than even in the days when it crushed Napoleon. Commerce has increased by leaps and bounds, and it is no longer confined within territorial limits. The arteries vital to the existence of civilised communities stretch over every ocean. States which in 1800 rated their maritime traffic at a few hundred thousand pounds sterling, value it now at many

millions. Others, whose flags, fifty years ago, were almost unknown on the high seas, possess to-day great fleets of merchantmen; and those who fifty years ago were self-dependent, rely in great part, for the maintenance of their prosperity, on their intercourse with distant continents. There is no great Power, and few small ones, to whom the loss of its sea-borne trade would be other than a most deadly blow; and there is no great Power that is not far more vulnerable than when Great Britain, single-handed, held her own against a European coalition. Colonies, commercial ports, dockyards, coaling-stations, are so many hostages to fortune. Year by year, they become more numerous. Year by year, as commercial rivalry grows more acute, they become more intimately bound up with the prosperity and prestige of their mother-countries. And to what end? To exist as pledges of peace, *auspicia melioris ævi*, or to fall an easy prey to the Power that is supreme at sea and can strike hard on land?

Even the baldest and briefest discussion of the vast subject of war would be incomplete without some reference to the relative merits of professional and unprofessional soldiers. Voluntary service still holds its grounds in the Anglo-Saxon states; and both the United Kingdom and America will have to a great extent to rely, in case of conflicts which tax all their resources, on troops who have neither the practice nor the discipline of their standing armies. What will be the value of these amateurs when pitted against regulars? Putting the question of *moral* aside, as leading us too far afield, it is clear that the individual amateur must depend upon his training. If, like the majority of the Boers, he is a good shot, a good scout, a good skirmisher, and, if mounted, a good horseman and horsemaster, he is undeniably a most useful soldier. But whether amateurs, *en masse*—that is, when organised into battalions and brigades—are thoroughly trustworthy, depends on the quality of their officers. With good officers, and a certain amount of previous training, there is no reason why bodies of infantry, artillery, or mounted infantry, composed entirely of unprofessional soldiers, should not do excellent service in the field. Where they are likely to fail is in discipline; and it would appear that at the

beginning of a campaign they are more liable to panic, less resolute in attack, less enduring under heavy losses and great hardships, and much slower in manœuvre than the professionals. To a certain extent this is inevitable; and it has a most important bearing on the value of the citizen soldier, for, as we have already seen, the beginning of a campaign is a most critical phase. In short, troops who are only half-trained, or who have been hastily raised, may be a positive danger to the army to which they belong; and the shelter of stout earthworks is the only place for them. Yet the presence of a certain number of experienced fighting men in the ranks may make all the difference; and, in any case, it is probable that battalions composed of unprofessional soldiers, the free citizens of a free and prosperous state, are little if at all inferior, as fighting units, to battalions composed of conscripts. But it is to be understood that the men possess the qualifications referred to above, that the officers are accustomed to command, and that both have a good practical knowledge of their duties in the field. A mob, however patriotic, carrying small-bore rifles is no more likely to hold its own to-day against well-led regulars than did the mob carrying pikes and flint-locks in the past. A small body of resolute civilians, well-armed and skilful marksmen, might easily, on their own ground, defeat the same number of trained soldiers, especially if the latter were badly led. But in a war of masses, the power of combination, of rapid and orderly movement, and of tactical manœuvring is bound to tell.

CHAPTER II

STRATEGY

THE exact meaning of the word 'strategy' is as generally misunderstood as the study of the art it describes is generally neglected. By civilians it is continually confounded with 'tactics,' and it would seem that even soldiers are not always quite clear as to the essential distinction between the two main branches of their profession. Yet such confusion is not due to the want of definition. Almost every military writer of repute has tried his hand at it, and the only embarrassment is to choose the best. The last perhaps will serve our purpose as well as any other. Strategy, according to the official text-book of the British infantry, is the art of bringing the enemy to battle, while tactics are the methods by which a commander seeks to overwhelm him when battle is joined. It will thus be seen that strategy leads up to the actual fighting—that is, to the tactical decision: but that while the two armies are seeking to destroy each other it remains in abeyance, to spring once more into operation as soon as the issue is decided. It will also be observed that the end of strategy is the pitched battle; and it is hardly necessary to point out that the encounter at which the strategist aims is one in which every possible advantage of numbers, ground, supplies, and *moral* shall be secured to himself, and which shall end in his enemy's annihilation.

The means by which this desirable consummation is attained are many, but the guiding principle is generally the same, and may be summed up in Napoleon's dictum, *the secret of war lies in the communications.* The line of supply may be said to be as vital to the existence of an army as the heart to the life of a human being. Just as the duellist who finds his adversary's

point menacing him with certain death, and his own guard astray, is compelled to conform to his adversary's movements, and to content himself with warding off his thrusts, so the commander whose communications are suddenly threatened finds himself in a false position, and he will be fortunate if he has not to change all his plans, to split up his force into more or less isolated detachments, and to fight with inferior numbers on ground which he has not had time to prepare, and where defeat will not be an ordinary failure, but will entail the ruin or the surrender of his whole army.

This great principle is common both to the offensive and the defensive. In the first case, the strategist is generally confronted with the following problem; *The enemy holds a strong position; how is he to be forced out of it?* In the second, the difficulty may be stated thus: *The enemy is advancing in superior numbers; how is he to be checked?* The answers are identical: *By threatening or cutting his line of communications;* and so reducing him to the situation described in the preceding paragraph. It is evident, however, that so vulnerable a point will be most carefully guarded; and, also, that the application of the principle is complicated by the fact that it is two-edged, or, to put it in plainer words, that a general in seeking to reach his adversary's heart may expose his own. In short, to place a force in such a position that it either threatens or severs the enemy's line of supply, is not only a difficult but a hazardous operation which, unless the force is overwhelmingly superior, and can push its way through all obstacles by sheer weight of numbers, can never be carried out except by stratagem and manœuvre.

The scope and nature of such expedients must to a great extent depend upon the circumstances of the particular case. There are certain principles, however, which serve as guides; and it will be seen that they are all accessory to a rule of strategy which is intimately connected with that which bids us strike at the enemy's communications, viz. *the concentration of superior strength, physical and moral, on the field of battle.*

'How often,' says Napier, 'have we not heard the genius of Buonaparte slighted, and his victories talked of as destitute of

merit, because at the point of attack he was superior in number to his enemies! This very fact, which has so often been converted into a sort of reproach, constitutes his greatest and truest praise. He so directed his attack as at once to divide his enemy and to fall with the mass of his own forces upon a point where their division, or the distribution of their troops, left them unable to resist him. It is not in man to defeat armies by the breath of his mouth; nor is Buonaparte commissioned, like Gideon, to confound and destroy a fort with 300 men. He knew that everything depended ultimately upon physical superiority; his genius is shown in this, that although outnumbered on the whole, he was always superior to his enemies at the decisive point.'

We will now take the case of an army superior in numbers, and note down in succession the methods by which those numbers may be reduced by an adversary who is operating against its communications: (a) *If the superior army is not yet concentrated, or is so distributed that the different parts cannot readily support each other, it may be defeated in detail.* (b) *If the superior army is concentrated, its commander, by one means or another, may be induced to make detachments and thus be weak everywhere.*

To accomplish (*a*) the means are:—1. More rapid mobilisation. 2. Surprises, effected by hard marching, secrecy, feints, and the adoption of an unexpected line of operations.

To accomplish (*b*):—1. The skilful use of detached forces, threatening points which the enemy is bound to protect, such as his immediate base of operations, or his line of supply. 2. Concealment, begetting uncertainty and apprehension. 3. Drawing the enemy forward into 'a zone of manœuvre' where topographical obstacles, the difficulties of supply, or judicious feints will compel him to split up his army.

In addition to these shifts of war, which are more or less aimed at the hostile army, there are others which are aimed almost exclusively at the hostile general. The moral equilibrium of the commander is often of even greater importance than the spirit of his troops. If that equilibrium can be upset, or his imagination so played upon that he gives way to

recklessness, over-confidence, or despair, victory should be very near. The methods which may be employed are numerous :

1. Drawing the enemy into a trap by an apparent dispersion of the forces against him.

2. Feigned retreat, inducing the enemy to pursue needlessly, and so commit mistakes.

3. Spreading false information.

4. Changing the base, and adopting a new and unexpected line of operations. This is one of the most effective weapons in the armoury of the strategist, who thereby not only secures great freedom of manœuvre, but may completely baffle his adversary's penetration.

Lastly, there are two great principles which are the foundation and the crown of all strategical methods, and which strike heavily and directly at the *moral* both of the hostile commander and of the troops he commands. They have been defined for us by Stonewall Jackson :

1. *Always mystify, mislead, and surprise the enemy.*

2. *Never give up the pursuit so long as your men have strength to follow, for an army routed, if hotly pursued, becomes panic-stricken, and can be defeated by half their numbers. To move swiftly, strike vigorously, and secure all the fruits of victory is the secret of successful war.*

It will be noted that some of these principles are to a certain extent conflicting. The concentration of the whole army in one body is undoubtedly a rule which is not to be infringed with impunity, and yet the use of detached forces is continually recommended as the surest means of making the enemy disperse his troops or commit other mistakes. The fact is, however, that strategical principles are neither to be rigidly applied nor over-scrupulously respected. They are to be obeyed rather in the spirit than in the letter ; and the strategist, to be successful, must know exactly how far he can go in disregarding or in modifying them, and be ingenious enough to bring those into adjustment which are apparently irreconcilable. For instance, a superior army may derive the greatest advantage from a breach of the rule of concentration. If it divides at the outset into two wings, each approaching the

enemy on a different line, and possibly supplied from a different base, it may not only cause the enemy the very greatest embarrassment, but eventually crush him between them, as Napoleon was crushed between the English and the Prussians at Waterloo, or Benedek between the Crown Prince and Prince Frederick Charles at Königgrätz, or Hooker between Lee and Jackson at Chancellorsville. It is to be observed, however, that the breach of rule is more apparent than real, in that concentration is merely deferred to the field of battle, instead of taking place before the troops march against the enemy. Thus, although the letter is infringed, the spirit is respected.

But because a partial application, or even an absolute disregard, of the principles of strategy does not necessarily spell disaster, it is not to be assumed that they are merely theoretical and pedantic formulæ. A general who was an absolute slave to them, who obstinately refused, for example, to make a detachment, would probably fail to achieve decisive success; but a general who acted in defiance of them would, to put it in the mildest form, run enormous risk. This is well shown by the campaign of Waterloo. Wellington and Blücher, at the outset, were not concentrated, and despite the fact that they had 210,000 men against Napoleon's 130,000, they had certainly the worst of it in the opening operations. Two days after their retreat from the line Quatre Bras—Ligny they retrieved the situation at Waterloo, concentrating successfully on the field of battle; but even on June 18, with all their numerical superiority, there were times when victory hung in the balance. It is thus quite clear that departure from the established principles involves great dangers, and it is therefore impossible to deny that those principles are no dry-as-dust apophthegms, but living forces, permeating the whole heart of strategy and exerting absolute control over the issue of a campaign.

The array of principles, as set out above, is by no means formidable, yet it contains all those that are absolutely essential in the field; and it might be imagined, therefore, that the practice of strategy is exceedingly easy. The exact contrary, however, is the case; and this arises mainly from the fact

that the operations of war are carried out in such obscurity, that it is always difficult for a general to see his way to the application of the ruling principles. It is on this point that soldiers have such deep distrust of civilian critics. The latter, as a very general rule, judge after the event. Ignorant of the practical difficulty, not to say the impossibility, of obtaining accurate information, and oblivious of the fact that so long as troops are mobile the military situation may be entirely changed in the course of a few hours, they almost invariably assume that the general, when he made his plans, must have been acquainted with the exact condition of affairs within the hostile lines.

The soldier, on the other hand, is aware that full knowledge on any one point connected with the enemy is very seldom forthcoming; that the data of the problems to be solved are never clear; that the condition of affairs has always to be more or less inferred; and that almost every operation is so involved in uncertainty, from beginning to end, that success is invariably a matter of doubt. 'I have fought,' said Wellington, 'a sufficient number of battles to know that the result is never certain, even with the best arrangements'; and it is within the experience of all those who have had to do with strategy in the field that the density of the 'fog of war' is almost appalling. For example, it would surely be imagined that a commander would have no difficulty whatever in ascertaining the direction of his adversary's line of communications. In practice, however, especially where small forces are concerned, this is exceedingly difficult; and there is always the embarrassing feeling that the enemy may have established a secondary line of supply, to which he may transfer his forces at any given moment. Again, a fortress or extended camp has, in theory, what may be called a fixed value: that is, it may be expected to hold out for a certain definite period. In war, however, the possibilities of accident invariably appear, and in reality often are, so numerous, that calculations which are based on the strength of the garrison and the works lose all their weight; and thus, when a fortified town is beleaguered, operations for its immediate relief become almost imperatively

necessary. It is true that operations for this end may often be strategically unsound, and that the general should consider the probabilities of the case rather than the possibilities. But human nature asserts itself in war as strongly as elsewhere. It is as constant and as important a factor as the difficulty of procuring information; and it is the recognition of these elemental facts which is the great point of difference between practical and theoretical strategy.

War is assuredly no mechanical art. Broadly speaking, it is a war between the brains and the grit of the two commanders, in which each strives to outwit and outlast the other; a conflict in which accident plays so prominent a part that mistakes, in one form or another, are absolutely unavoidable. It is thus pre-eminently the art of the man who dare take the risk; of the man who thinks deeply and thinks clearly; of the man who, when accident intervenes, is not thereby cast down, but changes his plans and his dispositions with the readiness of a resolute and reflective mind, which, so far as is possible, has foreseen and provided against mischance. Particularly is this the case with strategy. The tactical errors of a commander have often been redeemed by the skill and courage of his troops, but it is seldom indeed, against a vigilant enemy, that a strategical blunder does not carry its own punishment. Defeat, indeed, is far more often due to bad strategy than to bad tactics. An army may even be almost uniformly victorious in battle, and yet ultimately be compelled to yield. So the Confederates in 1861–65, the Turks in 1877–78, the Boers in 1899–1902, despite their numerous successes, were beaten in the end; but in each case the same strategical faults were conspicuous, the failure to concentrate in sufficient numbers to reap the fruits of victory, the unnecessary dispersion of the troops, and the deliberate disregard of the great end of strategy, viz. the annihilation of the enemy's fighting men, and the destruction of his material resources. To bring a stubborn enemy to his knees the war, like that of Rome against Carthage, 'must be carried into Africa.'

Strategy, then, is an art which almost more than any other is concerned with the fate of nations. Its study should be as

assiduous as its practice should be correct; and we now come to the questions: By whom should it be learned, and how should it be taught? It has been the fashion to assert that strategy is the province of the few, tactics of the many; that only those who are destined for, or ambitious of, high command need trouble about what is perhaps the most important branch of the art of war, and that it is therefore to be taught to staff officers alone. The fallacy of this most preposterous argument, if argument it may be called, is glaring. What soldier can possibly say that he will never be called upon to exercise an important command? Ambitious or not, he can no more foresee the responsibilities a campaign may force upon him than he can make sure, at the critical moment, of having a trained staff officer at his elbow to suggest the right course of action. But there is more to be said than this. If only the few are possessed of a knowledge of strategy, what terribly one-sided creatures must be the remainder!

Imagine an officer being asked some question as to Wellington or Napoleon and being compelled to confess that he knew nothing whatever of their achievements, or of the methods by which they had won so many victories! Could a man who thus admitted that he despised the experience and the teaching of the greatest and most successful masters of his profession by any conceivable stretch of courtesy be rightly called a professional soldier? If so, then a doctrine is applied to the profession of arms that is repudiated by every other profession, by every trade, and by every sport, in the wide world. What would be said of a man who, without the slightest knowledge of the habits of his quarry, the importance of the wind, of background, of silence, and of invisibility, started off unaccompanied to shoot red deer in a Scotch forest? He might be a first-rate rifle shot, but even if he got within sight of the herd it is in the last degree improbable that he would bring back a head. He would be looked upon by the commonest gillie as the most ignorant of novices, and most assuredly he would never be called a sportsman. And yet it is openly asserted that men who may one day become generals need no more knowledge of strategy—the art of approaching the quarry—than the cockney has of forest-craft! Is it possible to hold any

other opinion than that this extraordinary doctrine is either a most impudent excuse for idleness, or an abject admission that the more intellectual branch of the art military is utterly beyond the capacity of the ordinary soldier? Yet what can be more humiliating to the great body of officers than the reflection that only a few of their number are considered capable of wielding the weapons of the great captains; and that these few have to be bribed by high pay and good appointments to undergo the necessary study!

Nor is there any truth in the idea that the practice of strategy in the field can be confined to the higher ranks. Every officer in charge of a detached force or flying column, every officer who for the time being has to act independently, every officer in charge of a patrol, is constantly brought face to face with strategical considerations; and success or failure, even where the force is insignificant, will often depend upon his familiarity with strategical principles. The tide of warfare ebbs and flows on an ocean which is studded with strategical objectives. Positions, bridges, road and railway junctions, towns and villages, are always of the utmost importance to the accomplishment of a plan of campaign. Their occupation leads up, as it were by stepping-stones, to the attainment of the ultimate objective—that is, to the destruction of the enemy's army; and a quick recognition of their bearing on the course of operations, perhaps on the part of a very junior officer commanding a small column or conducting a reconnaissance, may go far towards the achievement of a decisive success. We accordingly arrive at the conclusion that all officers of every grade should, if it is deemed necessary that they should be professional soldiers—and it is for this that they are paid—be thoroughly familiar with strategical principles. Let us now consider how that familiarity is to be acquired.

We have not far to go to find the whole case put before us in a nutshell. '*The only right way of learning the science of war is to read and re-read the campaigns of the great captains.*' Such is the opinion of Napoleon; and he is a bold man who dares set himself in opposition to the great Corsican, who, if not the finest soldier that ever lived, was at least one of the most

sagacious of men. What could be more beneficial to the soldier than that the atmosphere he breathes from the first hour he determines on the profession of arms should be purely military; that the traditions of the army should be constantly before him, the campaigns of great generals the groundwork of his daily study, and famous marches or manœuvres the commonplaces of his ordinary knowledge?

It has been objected that pure theory can never be a substitute for practice; and that therefore what Napoleon intended to convey was, that the study of military history was a useful supplement to actual experience. It may be remarked, however, that 'staff-rides,' as exercises on the ground without troops have come to be called, are just as effective a means of teaching strategy as field days are of teaching tactics; in fact, a better means, for they bear a far closer resemblance to strategical work on a campaign than do the mimic battles of the manœuvre ground. The strategist might perform every one of his functions out of sight and hearing of the battle. The situations, then, in which he would find himself in war, and the problems he would have to solve, may be easily and almost exactly counterfeited in time of peace. The problems of tactics, on the other hand, in which shell and bullet are the predominant factors, can never be more than dimly and lifelessly presented.

But we cannot admit that Napoleon meant anything but what he said. In the first place, it can scarcely be denied that an intimate acquaintance with the processes of war, even though it should be purely theoretical, is as useful to the young officer as a knowledge of common law to the newly-called barrister. In the second place, military history offers a more comprehensive view of those processes than even active service; the platform is loftier, and every phase of warfare, from the marches of great armies to the forays of the guerilla, comes under observation. In the third place, the art of war, as we have already seen, is crystallised in a few great principles; and it is the study of military history alone that makes such principles so familiar that to apply them, or at all events to respect them, becomes a matter of instinct. It is not sufficient, any more than in the study of any other business, merely to place before the tiro

a general summary of the maxims by which he is to be guided. He must convince himself of their scope and value by constant reference to apt illustrations. His study of the campaigns of his famous predecessors must be active and not passive; he must put himself in their place, not content with merely reading a lively narrative, but working out every step of the operation with map and compass; investigating the reasons of each movement; tracing cause and effect, ascertaining the relative importance of the moral and the physical, and deducing for himself the principles on which the generals acted. It is probable that he will only discover what has been discovered already. But the value of the discovery will not be in the smallest degree diminished. Far from it; for knowledge that is gained by hard labour and independent effort is of higher worth, and much more likely to be permanently absorbed, than that which comes in by the ear.

Can the truth of this be questioned? In every human transaction the most fruitful cause of failure and of error is the imperfect comprehension or the neglect of principle. He who invariably sees the right course to be pursued is the man of ability, endowed with that clearness of perception which may sometimes be a natural gift, but is more often the product of sound training; he who follows that course, come what may, is the man of high character, of resolution, and of genius. If men fail to do what they ought to do, it is, more often than not, because on their horizon the true principles of conduct do not stand out above the mists of passion and minor issues as beacon lights, for the one reason that the mind's eye has not been trained to see them; or, in other words, that they have not, by study and reflection, realised the paramount importance of these 'living oracles.'

We may take it that in soldiering there is more to be learned from the history of great campaigns than from the manœuvres of the training-ground. For instance, a man thoroughly penetrated with the spirit of Napoleon's warfare would hardly fail, in all circumstances, to make his enemy's communications his first objective; and if Wellington's tactical methods had become a second nature to him, it would be strange indeed if he

were seduced into delivering a purely frontal attack. Moreover, although genius and resolution are no artificial products, there can be no doubt that a man who is aware that a commander cannot hope for success without running risks, that he must be prepared to act on very meagre information, and that he will often have to decide quickly under most disturbing conditions, is more likely to do well in war than the leader who has no idea of the magnitude of the personal responsibility inseparable from command against the enemy. Again, the study of military history results in the accumulation of a mass of facts. Now the knowledge of facts, however it may be acquired, constitutes experience; and the product of experience is habit, which, as being all powerful in moments of excitement or danger, plays an even more important part in warfare than in any other phase of human affairs.

Lastly, a knowledge of military history not only supplies a touchstone by which actual experience, whether of peace manœuvres or field service, may be tested, mistakes discovered, and reflection justified, but gives life and vigour to all instruction, and in the long years of peace the chief work of every officer, no matter how low or how high his rank, is the instruction of his subordinates. In every respect, then, it is absolutely clear that a knowledge of military history is an essential ingredient in the making of a really useful soldier; and that any system of military training or education which leaves strategy untouched, except by the few, is not only an insult to the officers of the army, but a danger to the State.

CHAPTER III

THE TACTICAL EMPLOYMENT OF CAVALRY

In what manner the cavalry of the twentieth century will differ from the hussars and cuirassiers of the nineteenth is undoubtedly, from a military point of view, one of the most interesting and most momentous questions of the day. Of the three arms, cavalry has undergone the least change since the introduction of gunpowder. The load upon the horse has been gradually lightened, but defensive armour has not yet been altogether discarded; and although the carbine and revolver have been added to the equipment of the trooper, there are armies in which weight, of both man and horse, is reckoned a more important attribute than either marksmanship or activity. Shock-tactics, the charge, and the hand-to-hand encounter are still the one ideal of cavalry action; and the power of manœuvring in great masses, maintaining an absolute uniformity of pace and formation, and moving at the highest speed with accurately dressed ranks, is the criterion of excellence.

To such an extent has this teaching been carried that the efficiency of the individual, especially in those duties which are carried out by single men or by small parties, cannot fairly be said to have received due attention. When cavalry held the pride of place upon the battlefield, as in feudal times and even later, the mastery of both horse and weapons by the individual officer and trooper was the predominant factor. In the English Civil War, for instance, the horsemanship and skill at fence of both Cavalier and Roundhead were remarkable; and their encounters were far more hotly contested, and much more bloody, than any which have since been seen. That the parliamentarians, after the first year or so of the war, were generally successful, is to be ascribed to Cromwell's introduction of a severer discipline

in the ranks of the Ironsides, no less than to his admirable leading. His troopers were taught the value of co-operation; and the means of ensuring co-operation, *i.e.* uniformity of pace and precision of movement when in mass, were constantly practised upon the training grounds. Nor are we to suppose that Cromwell was blind to a further advantage derived from the capacity for manœuvring at speed. He had seen too much of cavalry fighting, at the time he first took over the command and training of a considerable force, not to understand the great moral effect of large bodies of horsemen, wheeling and forming with mechanical smoothness, covering the ground at a speed that almost made each attack a surprise, and charging in lines whose unbroken front produced a most powerful impression of solidity and resolution. He saw, as Rupert never saw, that the power of swift movement in mass conferred upon the troops possessing it the enormous advantage of tactical mobility; and the readiness with which his regiments and brigades were transferred from one quarter of the battlefield to the other, throwing in their whole weight, time after time, at the point where their presence was decisive, in contradistinction to the reckless and ill-managed onsets of the Royalists, which ended, as a rule, in a confusion which it took hours to abate, show that he had fully realised the practical value of steady and continuous drill. It is to be noted, however, that Cromwell built up his cavalry on a foundation of high individual efficiency.

As time went on and armies became larger, and skill at arms, as a national characteristic, rarer, drill, discipline, manœuvres in mass, and a high degree of mobility came to outweigh all other considerations; and when the necessity of arming the nations brought about short service, the training of the individual, in any other branch of his business than that of riding boot to boot and of rendering instant obedience to the word or signal of his superior, fell more and more into abeyance. Shock-tactics filled the entire bill, and the cavalry of Europe, admirably trained to manœuvre and to attack, whether by the squadron of 150 sabres or the division of 3,000 or 4,000, was practically unfitted for any other duty. The climax of incompetency may be said to have been reached during that cycle of European war-

fare which began with the Crimea and ended with the Russo-Turkish conflict of 1877–78. The old spirit of dash and daring under fire was still conspicuous. Discipline and mobility were never higher. The regiments manœuvred with admirable precision at the highest speed, and never had great masses of horsemen been more easily controlled. And yet, in the whole history of war, it may be doubted whether the record of the cavalry was ever more meagre. It is true that in the course of the campaign of 1870–71 the German cavalry learned something of scouting, and that, owing to the utter supineness of the enemy, it obtained a large amount of valuable information. But its failures in this respect, especially at the outset, were very many; and it is not too much to say that, so far as peace training is concerned, it was little, if at all, superior to the cavalry of any other European Power. Moreover, when called upon to act dismounted, and to meet the enemy with fire instead of with *l'arme blanche*, it proved absolutely useless. The carbine was a popgun; the troopers knew nothing whatever of fighting on foot; their movements were impeded by their equipment; and a few francs-tireurs, armed with the chassepot, were enough to paralyse a whole brigade. That the cavalry so far screened the march of the armies in the rear that the French could obtain no information of the various movements is not to be gainsaid; but the efforts of the French to pierce the screen were feeble in the extreme, and there is no proof whatever that against a more active adversary the same result would have been achieved. In fact, to the student who follows out the operations of the cavalry of 1870–71 step by step, and who bears in mind its deficiencies in armament and training, it will appear very doubtful whether a strong body of mounted riflemen of the same type as the Boers, or, better still, of Sheridan's or Stuart's cavalry in the last years of the War of Secession, would not have held the German horsemen at bay from the first moment they crossed the frontier.

Had the successes gained by shock-tactics been very numerous, it might possibly be argued that the sacrifice of efficiency in detached and dismounted duties, as well as the training of the individual, was fully justified. But what are the facts?

The successes gained by shock-tactics, where anything larger than a regiment was engaged, are confined to the following :—

1. The victory of the British Heavy Brigade at Balaklava.

2. The charges of some twenty squadrons at Custozza, manœuvring by brigades, which checked and partially routed three divisions of most indifferent infantry.

3. The charges of the Austrian cavalry at Königgrätz, which drove back the Prussian horse and enabled Benedek's defeated troops to get away in safety.

4. The charge of six squadrons at Mars-la-Tour, which went through a French army corps, largely composed of recruits.

5. The defeat of 2,500 French horsemen, also at Mars-la-Tour, by about the same number of Germans.

6. The charge of the 11th and 17th German Hussars, near Vionville, against retreating infantry.

7. The charge of the German brigade at Loigny-Poupry, when a small brigade charged down on the flank of a large body of half-trained French infantry, and put them out of action for about three-quarters of an hour.

Such is the record: one great tactical success gained at Custozza; a retreating army saved from annihilation at Königgrätz; and five minor successes, which may or may not have influenced the ultimate issue; not one single instance of an effective and sustained pursuit; not one single instance, except Custozza, and there the infantry was armed with muzzle-loaders, of a charge decisive of the battle; not one single instance of infantry being scattered and cut down in panic flight; not one single instance of a force larger than a brigade intervening at a critical moment. And how many failures! How often were the cavalry dashed vainly in reckless gallantry against the hail of a thin line of rifles! How often were great masses held back inactive, without drawing a sabre or firing a shot, while the battle was decided by the infantry and the guns! How few the enterprises against the enemy's communications! How few men killed or disabled, even when cavalry met cavalry in the mêlée! Can it be said, in face of these facts, that the devotion to shock-tactics, the constant practice in massed movements, the discouragement of individualism, both in leaders and men, was

repaid by results? Does it not rather appear that there was some factor present on the modern battlefield which prevented the cavalry, trained to a pitch hitherto unknown, from reaping the same harvest as the horsemen of previous eras? Was not the attempt to apply the same principles to the battle of the breech-loader and the rifled cannon as had been applied successfully to the battles of the smooth-bore, a mistake from beginning to end; and should not the cavalry, confronted by new and revolutionary conditions, have sought new means of giving full effect to the mobility which makes it formidable?

The answer comes from across the Atlantic. It was as much the length of the War of Secession as native ingenuity which enabled the Americans to work out so many military problems to their logical conclusion. Their cavalry, in the beginning, was formed, as far as possible, on the European model. But before long it became a new type. It could manœuvre sufficiently well for all practical purposes. It was exceedingly mobile. It could charge home with the sabre or the revolver. In addition, it was so equipped that it could fight on foot as readily as in the saddle, and it was so armed and trained that when dismounted it was but little inferior to the infantry. Environment undoubtedly had much to do with its evolution. In the forests of the South there was seldom space for the manœuvres of a mass of horsemen, and obstacles were so numerous that a few men, armed with rifles, were generally able to beat back the charge of many squadrons. Nevertheless, the ground was not so cramped and difficult that shock-tactics were out of the question. Great cavalry combats, in which both sides rode at each other, were far more frequent than in any of the European campaigns referred to above; and the instances of cavalry charging infantry are so numerous as completely to disprove the common belief that the American horsemen were merely mounted infantry. The truth is that the Americans struck the true balance between shock and dismounted tactics. They were prepared for both, as the ground and the situation demanded; and, more than this, they used fire and *l'arme blanche* in the closest and most effective combination, against both cavalry and infantry. Due respect was paid

to individualism. The veteran trooper, when in the last years of the war he attained the proficiency at which his great leaders had always aimed, was a good shot, a skilful skirmisher, a good horseman, and a useful swordsman. He could charge home either mounted or dismounted. He had learned to scout, both in the saddle and on foot. His individualism was carefully cultivated: and if, for the purpose of manœuvring in large bodies, he was less well drilled than his European contemporary, as a fighting man, trained to all the exigencies of war, he was very much his superior. So brilliant were the achievements of the cavalry, Federal and Confederate, that in the minds of military students they have tended, in a certain measure, to obscure the work of the other arms. Space forbids an enumeration of even its most considerable successes. But it may be said that there is no finer instance of a pursuit than that of Lee's army by Sheridan in 1865; none of a screen impenetrable, even by a vigorous enemy, than that formed by Stuart in 1863–4; none of a well-contested cavalry battle than that near Brandy Station, June 9, 1863; none of cavalry on the defensive than the resistance of the Confederate horsemen before Spottsylvania on May 8, 1864, or of the Federals near Hawes' Shop, six weeks later; none of effective intervention on the field of battle than Sheridan's handling of his divisions, an incident most unaccountably overlooked by European tacticians, when Early's army was broken into fragments, principally by the vigour of the cavalry, in the Valley of the Shenandoah.

Nor are these all. Continental writers have persistently decried the value of the so-called raids, in which whole divisions of cavalry rode boldly round the hostile army, crossing his communications, and spreading panic and embarrassment far and wide; and doubtless, in several instances, the results were hardly worth the risks involved. But many of these enterprises were much more than forays or reconnaissances. Large bodies of cavalry, accompanied by horse artillery, and stripped of everything which would impede their mobility, operated for weeks, and even months, as detached forces, with specific strategical missions, and the value of their work cannot be overrated. 'The secret of war,' said Napoleon, 'lies in the

communications.' The profound wisdom of this remark has never been more forcibly illustrated than in the great American conflict. The lines of supply and of retreat were the first preoccupation of every leader of an army; their importance is continually impressed on even the casual student of the several campaigns; and they appear to have played a far more prominent part than is usually the case. To a certain extent the character of the theatre of war was accountable; but the strategical use of a well-organised, well-trained, and well-led cavalry had even more to say to it. If the chief difficulty of the American generals was the maintenance of their communications, it was because these communications were attacked with a method and a persistence which had been hitherto unknown in warfare. The operations of Forrest, of Grainger, of Wilson, of Earl van Dorn, of Sheridan, and of Hampton are brilliant examples of the great strategical value of a cavalry which is perfectly independent of the foot soldier, and which at the same time is in the highest degree mobile. Those who have never had to deal with the communications of an army may be unable to realise the effect that may be, and has been, produced by such a force; but no one with the least practical experience of the responsibilities which devolve upon a commander-in-chief will venture to abate one jot from the enormous strategical value assigned to it by American soldiers. It may, however, be unhesitatingly admitted that no cavalry of the nineteenth century, except the American, could have achieved the same results; and, as these results were far greater than those produced by any other cavalry since the advent of the breech-loader, it may be just as unhesitatingly declared that the horseman of the American war is the model of the efficient cavalryman.

The evolution of the American trooper is due, in the main, to new tactical conditions. In 1861 fire had already become the predominant factor in battle. In range and accuracy the rifle so far surpassed the musket that the infantry was more formidable than ever; and, even small forces, unless taken at a disadvantage, had very little to fear from a much larger number of cavalry armed with lance or sabre. In order, then, to avoid

being brought to a standstill at every turn by a few riflemen, the cavalry leaders soon found it necessary that at least a portion of their command should be equipped with firearms. A trial was given to the carbine, but despite its handiness, it was soon discarded in favour of the long rifle; and it was not long before the whole of the cavalry, with the exception of those regiments which carried breech-loading carbines, were armed, in addition to the sabre, or to the sabre and the revolver, with the same weapon as the infantry. It may fairly be asked whether a European cavalry, in case of war, would not be compelled, and compelled with even greater force, to follow precisely the same course as the Americans of 1861-65, substituting the rifle for the carbine, and modifying its tactics to meet the conditions of modern battle.

Let us consider the duties which cavalry is called upon to perform. In the first place, it is required to cover the front and flanks of the army to which it is attached, securing it from surprises, and enabling it to carry out movements of concentration or other strategical manœuvres unobserved. In the second place, it is required to burst through the screen which covers the movements and manœuvres of the opposing army, and to obtain the information which is absolutely essential to the commander-in-chief. Its action is thus twofold, protecting and at the same time aggressive; but its immediate enemy being the same in both cases, the enemy's mounted troops, it is evident that a bold offensive, which succeeds in sweeping away the hostile squadrons, is the readiest means of accomplishing the double duty. Attack, therefore, would seem to be imposed upon the cavalry so long as the armies are manœuvring; and the collision of large masses of horsemen, both seeking the encounter, a necessary preliminary to the meeting of armies on a decisive field. Now, when two bodies of cavalry meet in conflict, shock-tactics and *l'arme blanche* are unquestionably the speediest, the traditional, and the most natural method of deciding the issue. Thus shock-tactics, until one or other of the opposing bodies has been reduced to impotency, have been generally assumed to be the usual method by which cavalry will seek to attain its object. This conclusion, however, will

not stand the test of examination. In the first place, the action of the covering cavalry cannot be entirely aggressive. While the main body is moving to seek the enemy, there will be points, such as roads, bridges, fords, and the like, which, in the interests of the duty of protection, as well as to give the cavalry due freedom of manœuvre, will be economically and effectively held by riflemen. In the second place, fire, both before and during an encounter, has always been a most valuable auxiliary, as is proved by the existence of horse artillery. Thus in this phase also the presence of a body of riflemen, accompanied by machine-guns, will confer the greatest freedom of manœuvre on the force to which they belong, embarrassing the enemy, covering the line of retreat, and relieving the cavalry commander of all anxiety for the safety of his waggons and the security of his communications. In the third place, it is exceedingly improbable that in one quarter or other of the theatre of the cavalry operations the ground will not be of such a character as to favour dismounted tactics. It is evident, therefore, that cavalry, even when confronted only by mounted troops, cannot rely on shock-tactics only to achieve its object, and that the rifle is an absolutely indispensable auxiliary.

Arising out of these considerations two most important questions present themselves:

1. Are shock-tactics any longer possible against a force which is endowed with a high degree of fire-power?

2. Should the fire-power which has been shown to be essential to the free and effective working of cavalry be supplied by the cavalry itself, or by highly mobile infantry?

A force endowed with a large degree of fire-power possesses the most formidable attribute of infantry, and not even the most vehement partisan of *l'arme blanche* denies that against infantry, unless surprised, shock-tactics have the very smallest chance of success. But troops who dismount to make use of their rifles have two great disadvantages to contend with. The led horses are a source of weakness, physical and moral. They form a most sensitive and most vulnerable point. It is not always easy to place them in security; and the fact that they constitute the sole means of retreat renders them a source of

continual anxiety both to officer and man. The former is preoccupied with providing for the safe cover of a crowd of animals; the latter, fully realising his helplessness and discomfort if deprived of his mount, is never quite happy when there is the slightest chance that they may become separated. In consequence there is always a tendency on the part of dismounted men to think more of getting safely into the saddle than of offering a protracted resistance; they are thus less stubborn in defence than infantry, and more inclined to give way when there is a danger of their being outflanked. Now, there can be no doubt, when led horses and a safe retreat are concerned, that shock-tactics, which are the essence of rapidity and surprise, are far more to be feared than the slower process of an attack on foot. It is beyond question, therefore, that, in dealing with a dismounted force, whatever may be the degree of fire-power with which it is endowed, shock-tactics may play a most important part. The opportunities of effective outflanking or of surprise may possibly be few; but the very fact that the enemy has both the power and the will to seek out such opportunities and to charge home, is bound to hamper the movements and to affect the *moral* of any force of horsemen which depends on fire alone. Such a force, even if it could hold on to its position, would be unable, except under favourable conditions of ground, to make any forward progress, for directly it mounted it would be at the mercy of its antagonist, and it would thus be absolutely prevented from bursting through the hostile cavalry, and from acquiring the information which it is its main object to obtain. In the Valley of the Shenandoah, in 1864, the Confederate squadrons were armed only with rifles, while the Federals, under Sheridan, were trained both to fire and to charge. The result is significant. The Southerners, though admirable horsemen, were worsted at every turn, and their commander had at last to report that his mounted infantry were absolutely useless against the Union cavalry. At the same time, in consequence of the increased range, accuracy, and rapidity of both gun and rifle, the opportunities for charging will undoubtedly be fewer than before, and with every improvement of the firearm they must necessarily become more rare. A force while looking for

an opportunity must keep at such a distance from its objective that when the moment comes a surprise will not be easy to effect; and it would seem that small bodies, of the size of a squadron or so, which can make use of even insignificant cover to creep up where a heavier column would be at once detected, are far more likely to bring about success than are larger ones. What is required, therefore, for shock-tactics against cavalry endowed with fire-power—and, as we have seen, all cavalry comes under this designation—is great independence and skilled leading on the part of individual squadrons and, on the part of the commander of the whole force, a judicious distribution and handling of his troops, part making use of their rifles to hold the enemy's attention, while the remainder, moving at the will of their immediate leaders, seek for openings to ride home with lance or sabre.

The second question that arises, viz. whether the necessary fire-power should be supplied by the cavalry itself, or by a body of mounted riflemen attached to the brigade or the division, is intimately connected with psychological considerations, and it is from the standpoint of the individual horseman that it must be discussed. Let us see what peculiar qualities are required from the trooper in the charge—that is, in the operation which differentiates him from his comrades of the other arms. In the first place, there is resolution; in the second, a certain eagerness for battle; and in the third, the quick decision which seizes an opportunity the instant it offers.[1] The sum of these three qualities is dash, and it is above all things important that dash, the most precious possession of the cavalry soldier, should never be tampered with, either in training or in war. A cavalry without the true cavalry spirit, lacking all spark of chivalry, and jibbing at the prospect of self-sacrifice, would be of small value in shock-tactics; yet, if this spirit is not to disappear, it must be sedulously fostered. The cavalry soldier must be taught to consider himself as, first and foremost, the soldier of

[1] It is true that the quality of quick decision is more necessary to the leaders than to the men; but it is much to be doubted whether any body of cavalry could really be called efficient of which both leaders and men were not of the same temper.

the charge and of the mêlée. It is this that he must be led to look upon as the consummation of his training, the justification of his existence, as well as the finest, the most manful act of war. Now, if the cavalry soldier is called a mounted rifleman; if he is told that it is more useful to be a good shot than a good swordsman: if he is continually dismounted in preference to risking something by advancing; if he is not sometimes allowed to lose himself in the exhilaration of a charge, his dash invariably deteriorates. So, while it is absolutely essential that the trooper should be a good skirmisher and a good marksman, it is undoubtedly good policy to relieve him, so far as possible, of the necessity of fighting on foot.

Furthermore, from the psychological point of view, it is exceedingly desirable that for certain duties a force should be available which has a different training, different traditions, and a different ideal of the supreme incident of battle than the lancer or hussar. The mounted troops of an army, if they are handled as effectively as in the War of Secession, will often be called upon to capture and to hold localities and posts which are of strategic or tactical importance; and for the thorough fulfilment of their mission it is essential that they should be capable of carrying out, dismounted, an attack which culminates in an assault, as well as of defending a hastily occupied position against a hot counter-attack. Now, an attack on foot, culminating in an assault with the bayonet, demands in the troops who make it the same concentration of will and aspiration, the same exclusive training, and the same confidence in the weapon, which, as already shown, give shock-tactics their best chance of success. Dismounted cavalry, disposed as skirmishers, can render great assistance during the progress of an attack, holding the enemy to his ground, threatening him, and feinting; but the assault, that is the actual storming of the position, will be most effectively carried out by a force which, while for purposes of mobility it has been trained to ride, for purposes of fighting has been trained as infantry. So, too, on the defensive. The cavalry trooper, regarding himself and his horse as inseparable, habituated to constant movement, and but little concerned with the occupation of positions, is not likely

to offer so stout or so skilful a resistance as the soldier to whom the horse is but a secondary consideration, a stubborn defence the highest point of honour, and familiarity with the use of cover one of the chief ends of all instruction.

The need, then, of attaching some sort of special force to the cavalry brigades and divisions, from the psychological point of view, is clearly demonstrated; and it has now to be decided whether this force should be a permanent organisation, forming an integral part of the cavalry brigades and divisions, or whether the work can be done by a body of infantry organised on the spot, who have had sufficient practice in equitation to enable them to sit in their saddles and to groom their horses. Broadly speaking, and putting aside the question of expense, there can be little question but that the first suggestion is the better. A permanent force would be accustomed to work with the cavalry. The men would be better horse-masters, a most important consideration, both as regards mobility and the waste of horse-flesh. They could be trusted to act as scouts and take their share of reconnaissance work; and furthermore, it would be possible to give them sufficient instruction in the use of the sabre to enable them to have recourse to shock-tactics when these were the only means of defence, or in a pursuit or a mêlée when it was useless to fire. The fear that such a force might degenerate into indifferent cavalry cannot be accepted as a valid reason against its formation. Much, naturally, must depend upon the officers, more perhaps upon the system of inspection; but in a body of troops armed with the bayonet, and encouraged to prove themselves equal, if not superior, to the best infantry at purely infantry work, the cultivation of a healthy and distinctive *esprit de corps* should not be an insurmountable difficulty.

The formation, however, of a permanent force of mounted riflemen is a counsel of perfection; and in default, a mobile infantry, mounted on cobs, cycles, or even in light carts, is the only alternative. Such infantry, if well trained and well officered, is capable of excellent work in conjunction with cavalry, and is a source of strength with which it would be simply pedantic to dispense.

It has been shown in the preceding pages that when acting against mounted troops the following are the fundamental principles of cavalry tactics :—

(1) The combination, in the conflict, of shock and fire.

(2) The fire of the dismounted portion of the force, as well as of the guns, to be utilised as a pivot of manœuvre.[1]

(3) The line of retreat to be secured by dismounted riflemen.

(4) Independence of regimental and squadron leaders.

(5) An incessant watchfulness for opportunities of surprise.

(6) Skilful use of cover by regiments and squadrons, so as to take advantage of these opportunities by an unexpected charge.

(7) Protection of led horses is often only to be secured by shock.

So far as the details of shock-action are concerned, such as formation in one, two, or three lines, the movement and position of the horse artillery batteries, it is quite useless to lay down hard and fast rules. Four principles are to be observed :

(1) The enemy's line should always be outflanked.

(2) A reserve should always be retained in the hand of the commander.

(3) The guns should, if possible, accompany the cavalry when it advances with the view of charging, and, by securing one of the flanks, form a pivot of manœuvre.

(4) If the enemy is surprised, or attacked while he is manœuvring, success will be best assured. Beyond this it is unnecessary to go. Everything must depend on the readiness of the commander to adapt himself to the needs of the situation, to the quickness of his subordinates in apprehending and executing his instructions, and to the drill, training, and condition of both men and horses.

We now come to the employment of cavalry on the field of battle in conjunction with the other arms, and we have to note that with a certain school of tacticians the intervention of a vast mass of horsemen at the moment the defender is forced to

[1] A pivot of manœuvre is a force, fortress, or natural obstacle, which secures a flank.

evacuate his position is still, as ever, a pious expectation. The direction of the charge is presumably to be round the flank of the defeated army, and it appears to be anticipated that the cavalry, if led with sufficient boldness, and thundering forward in a close succession of steel-tipped lines, will have the supreme satisfaction of riding down a mob of panic-stricken fugitives, whose bandoliers are empty, or who are so paralysed by terror as to be incapable of using their rifles.

To this picture two objections may be taken. First, it is only exceedingly bad troops that have ever been reduced to such a prostrate condition as, for the application of their theory, the advocates of the cavalry torrent are compelled to postulate; and even bad troops possess, in the present firearm, a power of resistance, derived as much from confidence in the magazine as from magazine-fire, against which the flood will break in vain. Even if some portion of the retreating troops be surprised, it is unlikely in the extreme that the panic will spread far. The great extent of the battlefield is against it; the troops not immediately attacked will have ample warning, and the artillery and machine guns will have time to occupy positions. Moreover, it is exceedingly improbable that any army whatsoever will not have made adequate arrangements for an organised and deliberate retreat. Again, it is quite a delusion to expect that when a position is carried, the defending troops will dissolve into an uncontrollable and terrified mob. Men are not cattle; a few cool and intelligent riflemen, especially if favoured by the ground, can easily hold at bay a far larger number of mounted troopers; and it is not to be expected, even in an indifferent army, that such men will be lacking. So, even where the character of the country facilitates the deployment and the approach of a large force of cavalry, and makes surprise a possibility, the action of a mass of brigades or divisions will not penetrate beyond the fringe of battle; and it may be confidently expected that against guns and infantry, even if defeated and retreating, shock-tactics will be confined to regiments and squadrons acting independently and content with small captures. Whether such action will be worth while, whether it would not be better policy to concentrate the whole of the cavalry, and to

occupy positions which will block, or at least flank, the lines of retreat, must be determined by the commander in accordance with the circumstances of the particular case.

The second objection is that if the cavalry is armed with a rifle it will be simply a waste of fire-power to hold it in reserve for an opportunity that may never offer. The regiments must be dismounted and take part in the general attack, working, for preference, on the extreme flanks, or assailing posts and localities which cover the line of retreat. It is true that if it is to keep up a sustained pursuit when the enemy retreats, the cavalry must be nursed so long as he holds his position. But this applies rather to the horses than to the men; and while the latter are fighting on foot, the former are getting quite as much rest as if the regiments were kept back in reserve. It may be urged, however, that in case of the failure of the attack, the cavalry, if it has been kept back, will be available to cover the retreat. The answer is simple. If the cavalry is employed in the attack, reinforcing the efforts of the infantry by an appreciable accession of fire-power, the possibilities of retreat will be much reduced; while the mobility of the arm, on the emergency arising, should enable it to withdraw from the line of battle in time to protect the guns against counter-attack, and to give the infantry the opportunity of rallying, re-forming, and occupying a defensive position.[1]

What cavalry will have to apprehend during a pitched battle is that it will be constantly engaged with the cavalry of the enemy. The mass of the horsemen on both sides will be found far out on the flanks, striving to put mobility to the best use, threatening whatever is in rear of the hostile front, and at the same time protecting whatever is in rear of their own. But it is not, therefore, to be anticipated that the charge and counter-charge of all the available sabres on either side will be a feature of the great combats of cavalry that are bound to occur. It will very seldom be the case that the two sides will be so equally matched as to be equally prepared to risk the issue on the chances of a gigantic mêlée. One side must be the

[1] This does not mean that a portion of the cavalry should not be attached to the general reserve.

weaker, morally, numerically, or both, and it will certainly make the best use of the fire-power at its disposal, while, at the same time, it is in the highest degree unlikely that the stronger side will care to dispense with so valuable an auxiliary. These conflicts of cavalry will therefore take the form already indicated, even in the case when one army has been decisively defeated and its horsemen have the task of covering the retreat. Fire is a far better means of keeping the foe at a distance and of gaining time than shock; and a retreat from position to position, making full use of the rifle and the machine gun, may be less glorious but much more effective than the supreme self-sacrifice of a desperate onslaught on the masses of a victorious enemy at the very moment of his triumph.

The principles of cavalry tactics in conjunction with the other arms may now be summarised:

(1) Action on the flanks, protecting and aggressive simultaneously.

(2) Posts and localities covering the lines of retreat and communication, the proper objective.

(3) Action against infantry confined to surprises effected by bodies not larger than regiments or squadrons.

(4) The main object in pursuit to occupy positions blocking or flanking the line of retreat.

(5) The main object in retreat to occupy a succession of positions, and so hold the pursuers at a distance, and gain time.

The question of armament can hardly be excluded from a dissertation on cavalry tactics. We have seen that a rifle is indispensable. A sword, it is generally admitted, must be carried by every mounted man as the best means of protection against a sudden charge; and the rifleman is useless without his bayonet. Controversy is thus confined to the lance, and it may be said at once that the lance is undoubtedly a far more formidable weapon, even if it is not in reality more deadly, than the sabre or the revolver. Although there are many objections to it, such as its weight, its inconvenience in scouting and detached duties, the time taken up in mastering it, its uselessness in the mêlée or in the hands of a second or reinforcing rank, and the fact that its killing power depends altogether on

the momentum of the horse, its moral effect is so great that a force carrying it is irresistible in the shock. So much is this the case, that it may be doubted whether a cavalry armed only with swords and revolvers, if opposed by one armed with lances, would not absolutely decline to cross weapons in the saddle. If, then, mounted troops are to meet lancers in the field, they must either be able to oppose them with the same arm, or they must be restricted to the tactics of mounted riflemen, and condemned to comparative immobility. But no army, except one whose only mission is the defence of a mountainous or forest country, dare make the smallest sacrifice of mobility; and there is no escaping the conclusion that a really good cavalry must be trained to use the lance as well as the sabre and the rifle.[1]

It may be said, in conclusion, that the trooper of the twentieth century, if he is to fulfil the conditions of efficiency, must not only be a picked man, but that his facilities for training must be ample, his education protracted, and his instructors and leaders men of exceptional capacity. But when it is remembered that the cavalry is *par excellence* the strategical arm, that it depends on the cavalry, and on the cavalry alone, whether the commander of an army marches blindfold through the 'fog of war,' or whether it is the opposing general who is reduced to that disastrous plight, it will be admitted that to spare trouble or expense in the training and organisation of the mounted branch is as unpardonable a mistake as to adhere to obsolete traditions.

There are still other points that deserve attention. Entrenchments play as great a part in modern campaigns as in those of 1861–65 or of 1877–78, and entrenchments are all in favour of the force that awaits attack. But, as suggested above, antidotes exist, such as surprise, the sudden seizure of tactical points which have been left unoccupied, outflanking manœuvres, and movements against the line of retreat. Now

[1] As has been suggested, however, the nature of the country in which the army is likely to be engaged has much to say to this question. There are theatres of war, such as the greater part of America, Great Britain, Switzerland, Sweden, all mountainous countries, where the lance would be an intolerable incumbrance.

the effect of each of these operations depends, broadly speaking, on rapidity and secrecy; and, for reasons already alluded to, cavalry is the arm which best fulfils the required conditions. The principle of combination, however, demands that cavalry should always be supported in battle, directly or indirectly, by the other arms; or, to put it in another form, that the artillery and infantry should be so mobile as to be always within supporting distance when the cavalry comes into action. So far as the guns are concerned, there is no great difficulty; with the slow-moving foot-soldiers it is quite another matter. Much, however, may be done by constant training in combined manœuvres; much by sound administration, and by due regard for the physical condition of man and horse; more still—and here we touch the secret of all tactical, as well as strategical, success—by a thoroughly efficient staff. It is impossible to lay too much stress on this most powerful auxiliary.

Take any army of the nineteenth century, famous for the excellence of its grand tactics; Napoleon's army of 1805–06–07; Wellington's army of 1813–14; Lee's army of 1864–65; Grant's, Sherman's and Johnston's armies of the same period; Moltke's army of 1870: the staff of each one of them had been welded by years of experience and by the teaching of a great soldier into a magnificent instrument of war. They were not composed only of administrative officers, concerned with supply, organisation, quartering, and discipline, but of tacticians and strategists of no mean order. Combinations in war too often 'gang agley' from the neglect of some trifling precaution, some vagueness or omission in orders; and in the excitement of battle, or of approaching battle, when arrangements have to be made, possibly on the spur of the moment, for the co-operation of large bodies, unless he has been so trained that the measures necessary to ensure simultaneous and harmonious action occur to him instinctively, it is an exceedingly easy matter, even for an able and experienced soldier, to make the most deplorable mistakes. The practice of the staff in peace should not be less constant, to say the very least, than that of the units whose co-operation, as the only road to victory, it is the business of the staff to ensure.

CHAPTER IV

TACTICS OF THE THREE ARMS COMBINED

STRATEGY is the art of bringing the enemy to battle. Combined, or, to use the phraseology of the Napoleonic era, 'grand' tactics are the methods employed for his destruction by a force composed of all arms—that is, of infantry, artillery, and cavalry. Each of these possesses a power peculiar to itself, yet is dependent, for the full development of its power, to a greater or lesser degree upon the aid and co-operation of the rest. Infantry and artillery, unaccompanied by cavalry, if opposed by a force complete in all arms, are practically helpless, always liable to surprise, and whether attacking or defending, hampered by ignorance of the enemy's movements and bewildered by uncertainty. Cavalry trained to fight as infantry, and carrying a magazine rifle, is the ideal arm. But without artillery the most mobile cavalry cannot be expected, in ordinary circumstances, either to hold or to storm a position; and, when fighting dismounted, the necessity of protecting the horses so cramps its freedom of movement that it is less effective than infantry.

It is essential, then, for decisive success that every force which takes the field against an organised enemy should be composed of the three arms. Their relative proportions in the armies of the great Powers stand as follows:—

Five to six guns per 1,000 infantry soldiers;

One cavalry trooper per six infantry soldiers.

These proportions have undergone a marked change during the past hundred years. The number of guns has been very largely increased, while that of the cavalry has been slightly diminished. It is probable, however, that the proportion of the latter will soon be restored to the old standard, and in small armies will very greatly exceed it. The reason for these

disturbances is not far to seek. Before the introduction of the breechloader and the rifled cannon, the three arms of the service employed very different methods of combat. The infantry depended principally on the bayonet; the cavalry on the lance or sabre; the artillery on fire. Since the advent of the small-bore rifle and the quick-firing gun there is practically but one method, common to all arms. The bayonet and the sabre still have their part to play; but in almost every phase of the combat both infantry and cavalry, as well as the artillery, must rely on fire, and on fire alone, to compass the enemy's overthrow. All movements and all manœuvres have but one end in view, the development of fire in greater volume and more effectively directed than that of the opposing force; and it is 'superiority of fire,' to use the technical term, that decides the conflict.

For the attainment of this superiority no further rule can be laid down than that the three arms must combine. In war every situation differs. *Moral*, ground, numbers are never identical, and it is these considerations that form the basis of the problems with which a general has to deal. Of all errors in the conduct of war, none is more pernicious than the attempt to fight battles according to a sealed pattern. Even the formations in which troops approach the enemy or occupy a position must vary with the circumstances. In like manner, it is impossible to dictate a normal procedure for the combination of the three arms. Certain principles demand respect, for to infringe them generally spells disaster. But even this rule is not absolute. Great victories have been won not merely in spite of great principles being disregarded, but because they have been disregarded; and those are the greatest generals who have known when and where to discard the accepted maxims of war. Yet it would be very far from the truth to say that they did so because the principles embodied in those maxims had no weight with them. On the contrary, Napoleon, for instance, unfolded much of his practice of the art of war in a series of maxims, and the volume containing this series was Stonewall Jackson's constant companion in the field. We are not, however, to conclude that these great soldiers invariably shaped their conduct in accordance with the precepts they so diligently

studied. They looked on them as warnings of the dangers that generally follow certain courses of action, rather than as finger-posts showing the path to be pursued. When they formed their plans for defeating the enemy they undoubtedly weighed these warnings, instinctively, perhaps, rather than deliberately; but whether they obeyed them or rejected them was a question of judgment. They were in no way bound by them. Far from it. They would have no fetters cramping their intelligence and common-sense, for it was on their intelligence and common-sense, and on no normal procedure and hard-and-fast rules, that they relied to solve the problems of war. And herein is the key to successful combinations on the battlefield; the habit of using the wits, of subordinating the rules of theory to the needs of the moment, and if necessary discarding them *in toto*; the habit of improvising stratagems, of inventing on the spot new methods of attack and defence. Habit is all-powerful in war, especially under the excitement generated by the near presence of the enemy; and it is undeniably the case that when conflict is imminent the average officer will act exactly as he has been accustomed to on the manœuvre-grounds of peace. If he has been accustomed to stereotyped proceedings; to a perfunctory reconnaissance of the enemy and of the ground; to beginning the fight with the whole of his guns massed in a central position; to handling his infantry in one invariable formation; to using his cavalry without regard for their horses, he will probably do the same in action. The danger is great. A slavish adherence to set form and inelastic regulations had much to do with the destruction of the Prussians at Jena and Auerstadt, of the Austrians in 1866, and of the French in 1870; and if ill-organised and half-trained levies have sometimes triumphed over highly-educated and well-disciplined soldiers, it is because the latter have come to look on war as a mechanical rather than an intellectual art, and have lacked all power of originality and resource in dealing with tactical difficulties.

As we have already implied, the first principle of grand tactics is co-operation, *i.e.* the full development of the force inherent in each arm at the right place and the right time; and before discussing the methods of producing this develop-

ment it will be well to describe the conditions which affect it. The flat trajectory of the magazine rifle, smokeless powder, and the quick-firing field gun, have wrought a greater change in tactics than did the substitution of the breechloader for the musket and of the rifled cannon for the smooth-bore. With the older rifle, deadly as it was, the ground in front of a position was not thoroughly covered by bullets for more than 500 yards at most. Beyond that range, owing to the elevation of the trajectory, a great many bullets flew high over the heads of men even in an upright position. Nowadays, the ground for 900 yards in front of a strong line of infantry, provided that the rifles are held a few inches above the level, is so closely swept by the sheet of lead as to be practically impassable by men standing upright or even crouching. The long deadly zone of this horizontal fire, which every improvement in the firearm tends to increase, is the most potent factor in modern battle. Of little less importance is smokeless powder. The absolute invisibility of a skilful enemy renders reconnaissance tenfold more difficult than heretofore. Smoke betrayed not only the position but the strength of the troops who held it; the new powder tells nothing. Moreover, the rattle of rapid fire is most deceptive, for a few riflemen, or a few guns, firing at their utmost speed, give the idea of far larger numbers than are actually present. Again, at the crisis of the conflict the quick-firing field-piece is far more effective than the gun it superseded. On troops whose power of resistance is already strained to the utmost, on masses of men and horses, on crowds breaking to the rear, on a line suddenly assailed in flank, the constant hail of shells, even if less devastating than might be imagined, is terribly demoralising. Nor is greater range and greater accuracy without influence on *moral*. Enfilade fire, the most telling of all, is more easily brought to bear, and more deadly; while the knowledge that, if once they are outflanked, they can no longer reckon, owing to the range of the enemy's projectiles, on a secure line of retreat, tends to shake the nerves of the most stubborn fighters.

Such are the conditions of modern battle, and it is often urged that they are distinctly in favour of defensive tactics;

in other words, that the force which awaits attack can develop the full force of each arm with more facility than that which delivers it. The contention may be true; but it is not always realised that anything which gives new strength to the defence at the same time adds something to the advantage of the army which attacks. The net outcome of the improvements in rifles, guns, and powder is that far fewer men are required to hold a position than of old. A direct (or frontal) attack against good troops well posted, always a desperate undertaking, has now become suicidal. To a certain extent this favours the defence. A much larger number than formerly can be employed by the defenders *in attack*. This is to the good. But the assailant profits in an almost equal ratio. His strength has always lain in his power of manœuvring, of hiding his movements, and of massing suddenly against some weak point. To-day his power of manœuvring is greater than before. The increased strength of the defence renders it comparatively easy for him to form with a part of his force an impenetrable barrier behind which the remainder can move unobserved. He needs far fewer men and guns to cover his communications; and a general counter-attack, delivered like those of Wellington, of the French in 1870, of Osman at Plevna, direct to the front, is very little to be dreaded. Moreover, the object of the assailant's manœuvres will be to place portions of his force on the flank, or flanks, of the position he is attacking. If he can accomplish this, the effect, moral and physical, of the enfilade fire he brings to bear upon the enemy's front will be far greater than that which attended a similar operation when fire was of less account. In short, the process of envelopment is easier than it used to be; and envelopment, which means that the enemy is under fire from several directions, is much more effective than in the past.

It does not appear, then, that the new conditions are altogether in favour of the defender. To win a decisive victory and annihilate the enemy he must, at some time or another, leave his position and attack. But the time, if not the place, must depend on his adversary's movements, and will only be disclosed during the progress of the battle. What

time will be given the defender for the long preliminaries which attack against even a shaken force demands, for the preparation by artillery, for the massing of the infantry, for their deployment in line of battle, for the issue of adequate orders? Tacticians have long been puzzled over the rarity and ineffectiveness of the counter-stroke in modern campaigns. The reason lies in the increased power of the local defensive, even with the needle-gun and the slow-firing cannon. With the newer weapons this power is trebled. The counter-stroke, therefore, is more difficult than ever; and this difficulty, combined with the greatly enhanced effect of enveloping fire, gives a marked advantage to the assailant. Resistance is more protracted than heretofore, but defence, as a method of giving battle, is no stronger.

The question will probably suggest itself, why should envelopment be the monopoly of the advancing army? The reply is easy. Save in exceptional circumstances, the force that surrenders the initiative and stands still in position will be too weak for far-reaching manœuvres. Envelopment requires a numerical superiority or a vastly higher *moral*; and an army possessing these advantages must needs seek out its adversary and attack him, for the very simple reason that not otherwise can he be brought to battle. Yet it is not to be understood that the numerically inferior army is debarred from attacking; but it may be taken for granted that it will not do so until it sees the opportunity—the fruit, as a rule, of more skilful strategy—of falling on an isolated portion of the enemy's forces.

It would seem, however, that under the new conditions an army can split up into detachments with greater impunity than heretofore. Some of the most remarkable victories in history—Vittoria, Bautzen, Waterloo, the first and second Manassas, Chancellorsville, Königgrätz—have been won by two distinct forces, operating from different bases, or approaching the field of battle from different directions, and crushing the enemy between them. This 'sweep of the dragon's wings' is by no means an easy operation to put into successful practice. Moltke, indeed, has laid it down that the junction of two

previously separated forces on the field of battle is the highest triumph of generalship; and Napoleon, although on more than one occasion he availed himself of the expedient, was never weary of pointing out the risk. It cannot, therefore, be questioned that separation has hitherto involved great dangers. Unless the separated forces acted in perfect unison, unless their leaders displayed the utmost activity and resolution, it was always to be apprehended that the one might be attacked and defeated before the other could intervene. At Waterloo, for instance, some of the Prussian generals, when they reached the neighbourhood of the field and saw, as they believed, the British retreating, were for turning back immediately. Again, the timidity of Ney, on finding himself separated from the main army, made Bautzen a barren victory; and if there is one thing more conclusively proved by military history than another, it is that without determined, energetic, and skilful leaders, without superiority of *moral*, or great superiority of numbers, movements entailing separation were, under past conditions, very likely to end in disaster. To a certain extent this still holds good, for human nature, in war, recoils from nothing so much as from isolation. Nevertheless, the use of the field telegraph has done much to modify the risks that were formerly attendant on such manœuvres, and the increased strength of the local defensive has brought them within the scope of everyday tactics. It may be assumed, therefore, that the directors of future campaigns will have always in view the advantages to be derived from hurling a fresh force—whose approach, if possible, has been concealed until it opens fire—against the enemy's flank and rear; and the sudden onset of Blücher at Waterloo, of Lee at the second Manassas, of Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville, of the Crown Prince of Prussia at Königgrätz, will be the ideal of the decisive act of battle.

It is to be observed, however, that successful converging movements have been carried out more frequently by a force acting on the offensive than on the defensive. In the first place, as has been said above, an army which adopts the offensive has usually the superior numbers or the superior

moral, and it consequently incurs less risk of separation. In the second place, it is usually superior in cavalry, and is thus able to prevent all knowledge of the separation from reaching the enemy, as well as to conceal the march of the outflanking column. We may conclude, therefore, that it is only when the defender has the more powerful cavalry, and is at least equal to his adversary in numbers and in *moral*, that he will dare to deliver a converging counter-stroke.

The army, then, which assumes the strategical offensive has, as a general rule, the best chance of employing this most effective manœuvre; but much depends on the quality and handling of the cavalry. If the cavalry is so armed and trained that it is capable of holding off the enemy's scouts and patrols, a tactical surprise may be effected, and surprise is far more than half the battle, not only in offensive operations from different bases, but in every species of attack. An ordinary enveloping movement for which a portion of the main army is detached after it reaches the vicinity of the battlefield, is much more likely to be effective if the troops making it are protected from observation up to the last moment. Cavalry, then, sharing the enormous defensive power conferred by a low trajectory and rapidity of fire, play a rôle in grand tactics of which the importance can hardly be over-estimated. They make it possible for a general to adopt the most brilliant of all manœuvres, the converging attack, and to make that attack, as indeed all other attacks, more or less of a surprise.

But to protect the troops in rear from observation is not the only duty of cavalry. Reconnaissance of the enemy's position is the foremost of its functions, and the occupation of points of tactical vantage, such as hills, woods, villages, &c., behind which the main army can deploy in security, or the outflanking columns march unobserved, is not far behind. The pursuit, too, falls upon the mounted arm, the destruction of the enemy's trains, the capture of his guns, the spreading of demoralisation far and wide. But most important, perhaps, of all its functions are the manœuvres which so threaten the enemy's line of retreat that he is compelled to evacuate his position, and those which cut off his last avenue of escape. A

cavalry skilfully handled, as at Appomattox or Paardeberg, may bring about the crowning triumph of grand tactics, viz. the hemming in of a force so closely that it has either to attack at a disadvantage or to surrender.

The cavalry attached to an army on the defensive acts on much the same lines, furnishing a large proportion of the outpost or advanced troops, and making use of its mobility to prolong the line of battle when a flank is threatened, and of its power of defence to hold back any force which may attempt to work round in the rear. In a word, the cavalry of the defence endeavours to obstruct that process of envelopment which the cavalry of the attack endeavours to complete.

It has long been understood that to attain the superiority of fire over a vigilant enemy in a strong position, a heavy artillery bombardment is as absolutely essential a preliminary as a thorough reconnaissance. It has not, however, been always realised that unless the infantry co-operate, the artillery is not likely to produce the slightest result. If the infantry is kept behind the guns, or at such a distance from the position that it cannot pass quickly to the assault, the enemy during the cannonade will keep his troops under cover, perhaps leaving his trenches unoccupied, and thus present no target to the guns. It is an important principle, therefore, of combined tactics that the infantry should co-operate with the artillery in the preliminary bombardment, for by this means only will the enemy be compelled to man his defences, to show himself above his parapets, and thus expose himself to the demoralising effect of shrapnel.

Again, however thorough the artillery preparation may have been, it is not likely to have caused such losses that the defender's fire will be altogether innocuous when the attacking infantry advances. In fact, the assailant will probably suffer very heavily, for infantry advancing to the attack—that is, before it has established a strong firing line at decisive range (within 800 yards) from the enemy's position—can do nothing towards attaining the superiority of fire. Over 800 yards, if the enemy is well covered, its fire will be practically harmless, for the very good reason that the men will see no target at

which to aim. But if the artillery co-operate by pouring a heavy and concentrated fire on the defender's lines, and, if necessary, by pushing forward batteries or guns to the most effective range, it will so disturb the aim of his riflemen as to secure the attacking troops from heavy loss. We deduce, therefore, another principle; superiority of fire can only be gained by the close co-operation of the artillery and infantry at every stage of the attack.

Nor is it the guns alone that should cover the infantry advance. Where the ground permits, a portion of the infantry should be detailed for this purpose before the remainder move forward. At 2,000 yards telescopes and strong glasses can be used to locate the exact position of the enemy's trenches; the range, by means of mechanical appliances, can be accurately measured; and the fire of the companies can be controlled with the same ease as that of the machine guns. Such fire is little less effective than that of field or horse artillery. It may be less demoralising; but, if the exact range can be ascertained, it will be more accurate, for infantry has not to contend with the technical difficulties, fuzes, the errors of the day, &c., of the sister arm. Especially will it be effective when it enfilades, or strikes at an oblique angle, the front of the defence. We are justified, therefore, in laying down the secondary principle that long-range rifle fire is an important auxiliary to the artillery in covering the advance of attacking infantry.

It cannot escape notice that the application of these principles is intimately connected with the use of ground. If there are favourable positions for the artillery or localities adapted to the development of long-range rifle fire; if the enemy's line is so exposed and well marked that the guns can fire over the heads of the attacking infantry until the very moment of assault; or if it is open to enfilade, the co-operation of infantry and artillery should be comparatively easy. But it is no simple matter, without constant practice, to recognise at a glance the capabilities of the ground, and the manner in which the various physical features, hills, knolls, ridges, woods, should be employed in order to attain the superiority of fire.

If we look back on history, we cannot but be struck by the exceedingly important part that the appreciation or neglect of the capacities of ground has played in every campaign. The most brilliant victories have been won by manœuvres which, if not suggested by the physical features of the battlefield, were at least deprived, by the nature of the ground, of half their risk. Rosbach, Leuthen, Austerlitz, Friedland, Dresden, Vittoria, Orthez, Chancellorsville, the Green Hills at Plevna, are examples. Nor can we fail to notice that the object of the great masters of tactics in carefully reconnoitring the enemy was to discover the key point or points of his position, and to judge for themselves how each separate locality, wood, village, farm, or hill, might be turned to account and fitted into the plan of battle. In short, we see in many most successful battles an almost methodical progression from point to point, each successive capture weakening the enemy's position, and paving the way for a further and more decisive advance; and the method pursued seems to have been in every case the same. 'By threatening the village on the left, and seizing the wood in rear of it, I shall attract the enemy's attention, and perhaps his reserves. As soon as I have succeeded in doing this, I shall attack the hill on his right, and having captured this, bring every available gun to bear upon the central ridge, and attack, under cover of their fire, in full strength.' This, or something very like it, appears to have been the ordinary mental process of such leaders as Frederick, Wellington, Napoleon, and Lee, and in many respects it is still eminently adapted to the field of battle. The difficulty of reconnaissance, the increased power of the defence against direct attack, the difficulty, owing to the wide front occupied by a defending force, of developing flank attacks, the general use of entrenchments, will make the fight for each locality long and exhausting; and it will consequently be necessary for a general to proceed with the utmost caution, and to make certain of securing one point of vantage before he attacks the next. The attack, moreover, of each point will consume far more troops, in proportion to the strength of the army, than heretofore. The whole army, indeed, may be employed in mastering one single

point, part keeping the enemy employed elsewhere, the remainder combining for the decisive attack. The battle, more often than not, will thus resolve itself into a distinct series of engagements, each ranging round a different locality and each protracted over many hours.

A systematic attack, wresting point after point, in the order of their importance, from the enemy's possession, is not, however, the only expedient by which the defensive may be overcome. Surprise may be called into play. Manœuvring, which has been described as the 'antidote to entrenchments,' is likely to be a conspicuous feature in all skilful tactical operations. Feints will seldom be neglected; and night marches, preparatory to an attack at dawn from an unexpected direction, will be constantly resorted to. With the exception of the first, each of these is made easier by the increased power of the local defensive, and by the enhanced difficulty of reconnaissance. A screen, behind which troops moving to a flank or making a night march will be secure from observation or interference, can be established in any ordinary country without much difficulty and maintained by comparatively small numbers; while no better means of deceiving the enemy, or of making feints effective, could have been invented than the magazine rifle, the quick-firing gun and smokeless powder.

But while the latest productions of mechanical invention have done much to help the general offensive, they have by no means made combination easier, and the success of the attack, as a rule, has always depended on the combination between the units, be they battalions, brigades, or divisions, of which an army is composed. To secure such combination has therefore been the constant aim of all tacticians. The ideal of many has been a simultaneous attack against the front and flank, or front and flanks, made on a uniform system, with all the troops disposed in a uniform manner. They apparently assumed that everything must give way before the rush of superior numbers; that localities would be submerged beneath the flood; that accidents of ground, even if utilised by the enemy, would never produce a serious check; in fact, that the effect of physical features might be ignored, and each separate attack from left,

right, and centre might be expected to reach close quarters at approximately the same time. On the other hand, there are those who have taken into account both the ground and the flat trajectory, and who have taught that the normal, simultaneous system, described above, is far less practical than a system which gives to each unit its specific task, which allots that task in accordance with the ground, and which arranges for combination by instructions which differ for every unit. In this system there is no uniformity, and it is therefore less simple than the other; but it is founded on sound principles. It does not, indeed, ensure combination; but inasmuch as it takes each physical difficulty into consideration, and recognises that a battle is a succession of efforts, not one continuous rush, it is likely to come much nearer than the other. It is not a popular system. It is more complicated than the almost mechanical manœuvres of the first; it is less easy to practise in peace; owing to the lack of uniformity, it is much less picturesque; and it makes a large demand on the intelligence of all ranks.

An officer commanding several units, if he wishes to make such use of the ground that each unit may support the others, and if he determines to allot to each its specific task, must not only make a careful reconnaissance and think out a definite plan of action, but he must issue such clear and comprehensive orders that every subordinate commander will thoroughly understand the general design, the part he has himself to play, and the manner in which he is to co-operate with others. By this means only can he ensure intelligent combination and resolute action; but it is hardly necessary to say that to frame adequate orders to this end requires a sustained intellectual effort, plenty of previous practice, a cool brain, a mind which knows exactly what it intends to do and how it is to be done. Moreover, unless the commanders of units and those under them are well trained, even the clearest and most comprehensive orders will probably fail to produce the desired results.

There is one more point connected with the attack which demands notice. It should always be the aim of a general, even when in command of a superior force, to destroy his enemy with as little loss as possible to himself. Napoleon prided himself

on winning his great triumph at Ulm with 'the legs of his soldiers,' and Moltke's stupendous victory at Sedan, where 140,000 Frenchmen laid down their arms, with an additional loss in killed and wounded of 18,000, cost the Germans no more than 2,800 lives. At first sight, then, it would appear that an attack on a strong position, especially if entrenched and prepared, should be consistently avoided, and the enemy manœuvred out of it. And no doubt this is an excellent rule. Nevertheless, strategical reasons often forbid delay; and therefore, when time presses, it may happen that the attack has to be delivered then and there, and the consequent sacrifice of life deliberately accepted. But it is worth noting that the necessity of taking time by the forelock is apt to produce undue haste, disregard of ordinary precautions, and the neglect of essential preliminaries, such as reconnaissance, the conception of a comprehensive plan of battle, and the issue of clear orders. Furthermore, a reluctance to incur losses often leads to a small portion only of the force being employed in attack, while the remainder are either kept in reserve or so timidly handled as to lend no assistance whatever to the assaulting troops. Such half-hearted tactics bring with them their own punishment. Even if the battle be won, the losses of the troops actually under fire are generally heavier than would have fallen ou the whole army had it been resolutely engaged; while it is exceedingly unlikely that the victory will be decisive. To take a strong position without suffering enormous losses demands the very closest co-operation of every element of force which the commander has at his disposal. What should be the object of such co-operation is a question of much interest. Under the old conditions the general idea of offensive tactics was by feints and secondary attacks to draw off the defender's attention, and, if possible, his reserves, from the weakest point of the position, and then to attack that point with an overwhelming mass of men and guns. It would be too much to say that this principle is no longer applicable, for it will always be necessary that the full weight of the artillery, when once the battle has become general, should be directed against some particular portion of the defender's line; but envelopment, and the capture of good

'fire positions,' especially of localities which favour enfilade or oblique fire, are a far surer and much less costly means, against good troops, of attaining that superiority of fire which decides the victory.

The grand tactics of the defence, of which the soul is the counter-stroke, are in many respects similar to those of the attack. The assailant at the outset occupies certain localities, and so long as he holds out he covers his communications, and the greater part of the force is available for active operations. The defender acts in much the same fashion. He occupies a position which protects his communications, and, if possible, threatens the communications of his adversary, and, using this position as a pivot of manœuvre, he keeps a large force in hand for the counter-stroke.

It is in the employment of the force in hand that the great difference arises between an active and a passive attitude. The defender can seldom decide, when he takes up his position, at what moment and at what place he will let this force slip; his adversary, on the other hand, can determine the exact rôle of every unit before a shot is fired. It is most important, therefore, that the force detailed for the counter-stroke should be kept absolutely distinct from the garrison of the pivot of manœuvre, that it should be in every respect mobile, and be used for no other purpose than delivering a vigorous attack at the place and at the time a good opportunity offers. Whether it should be tied down to one particular spot is a debatable question. Some part of the battlefield may be more favourable to counter-attack than another, and it is of course desirable, when the blow is struck, to aim at the enemy's line of communication and his strategic flank. But the opening for the counter-stroke is more often offered by the enemy's mistakes than by the ground, and it is impossible to predict where mistakes are likely to be made. We might say, then, that the force set aside for the counter-stroke, unless it came from a distance like Blücher's army at Waterloo, should be posted where it can rapidly intervene on any part of the battlefield. Yet in conflicts fought over a very wide front this would manifestly be impossible; and, as a matter

of fact, the whole question is so dependent on local circumstances that no rule can be laid down. It is clear, however, that the value of mounted troops in this respect is very great.

It has been suggested that the attack will draw more advantage from feigned attacks than heretofore; but it is not the attack alone that will derive benefit from the power of deception that lies in quick-firing weapons. By detaching small mobile forces to tactical points beyond the flanks, and by pushing them forward in advance of the main line of defence, the difficulties of reconnaissance on the part of the assailant will be largely increased; and it will be always on the cards that uncertainty and the loss of time may betray him into undue extension, dissipation of strength, and purely frontal attacks on the strongest points of the position. In ordinary country, where troops can manœuvre with facility, a few quick-firing guns, constantly changing their position, will add enormously to the effect of these 'false fronts' and 'false flanks,' and it may here be stated that the mobility of field and horse artillery confers a great advantage on the defender. In ordinary circumstances, that is, when he is outnumbered in guns, it is questionable whether he is likely to gain anything by accepting a duel with the opposing batteries. His heavy artillery should be sufficient to protect the front and flanks of the central fortress—his pivot of manœuvre—leaving the remainder available to prevent the assailant from securing strong tactical points and to prepare the counter-stroke. Especially will it be important for the artillery to keep down enfilade and oblique fire, and cover should always be provided whence guns can sweep with shrapnel the hills or ridges which lie beyond the flanks.

The artillery of the defence, in fact, should be handled on the same principles as the light artillery which forms part of the armament of a fortress, and it should only be concentrated when it is clear that the enemy is about to deliver a resolute attack against some one point of the position, or just previous to the counter-stroke. In both cases as many guns as possible should co-operate. The assailant will endeavour to cover the advance of his infantry by overwhelming

the entrenchments with the fire of a mass of guns, and this the defender's artillery must do its best to render inaccurate and harmless, leaving the enemy's infantry alone until it is clear that the advance is progressing, and that the attack is gaining the upper hand. For the counter-stroke, concentration is even more important. As a rule, the time for preparation will be short, and yet preparation is as essential as in the attack; the more guns, therefore, that can be brought into action, the less likelihood of failure. It is true that the counter-stroke, as a rule, will only have to deal with troops shaken by long fighting or by repulse; but behind them will be the batteries undemoralised, probably superior in numbers, and maintaining an iron grip on the ground already won. The combination, then, of infantry, cavalry, and artillery should be as carefully planned in the counter-stroke as in the attack. Superiority of fire must be attained by a skilful use of the ground, by enveloping and enfilading the point of attack.


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CHAPTER V

NOTES ON WELLINGTON

THE ordinary attitude of Englishmen towards the men who are engaged in making history, in pushing forward the expansion of the Empire, and in leading the nation forward on the path of progress, is not generally an attitude of wholesale appreciation. Our great men as a rule have to wait for their reward until their work is done; until the flood of party and social opposition has subsided; until facts assume their true significance, and great results, disencumbered of all the circumstances which tended to obscure them, stand out in bold relief. Then, although late in coming, the recognition of Englishmen is no longer half-hearted nor is it insincere; if tardy, it is thorough.

The history of Wellington is no exception. While his work was doing, while he was stemming the tide of Napoleon's conquests, and creating a new army, he met with scant support from either the nation or the Government, and even his generals and his officers were not always loyal. Until the Peninsular War was well-nigh over, he was under-rated both by friend and foe. It was not Napoleon alone who considered him a mere 'Sepoy general.' It was not only the French who overlooked the characteristics he had displayed in India—his strength of character, his daring, his rapidity of movement, his prudence, his ability. For many years, when beset by the difficulties of his arduous campaigns, he had to struggle against the misrepresentations of the Press, the insubordination of his generals, the dislike of his army, and the lukewarm confidence of the Ministry. We know that he reformed the army; that he introduced a higher standard of discipline, a new system of command, improvements in tactics, improvements in administration, improvements in interior economy. And we know now that

every one of these innovations was wise and judicious. But it would be a great mistake to think that they were welcomed by his contemporaries. On the contrary, each one of the changes he insisted on was stubbornly resisted. There were plenty of officers who declared that the army must go to the dogs when the men were ordered to cut off their pigtails. There were many who thought their rights were infringed when they were ordered to look after their own companies. And yet, to-day, who remembers his critics, the leader-writers who vilified him, the generals who knew so much better than he did what ought to be done, and how to do it; the enemies who despised him, the regimental officers who abused him? or, if they are remembered, how mean and ridiculous do they appear!

It may be questioned, at the same time, whether the admiration with which we now regard the great Duke is always of a practical nature. An American sailor was the first to reveal to the English people, and even to English sailors, the influence of sea-power, and the real import of the deeds of our great admirals. Has the same light been thrown on the deeds of Wellington, on his methods of war, and on the tremendous force of the counter-stroke which sea-power enabled his army to deliver? Do soldiers realise how his military character was formed; whence came his skill, both as strategist and tactician, and how he perfected himself in the exercise of his profession? Do we always remember that it was by hard work, in peace as well as in war, by devotion to duty in its highest sense, by doing whatsoever his hand found to do with all his might, that Wellington not only won his battles, but made his soldiers the most formidable in Europe? A reply in the affirmative is hardly possible, and there is some excuse. Although there has been no lack of writers who have dealt with his career, the majority have been neither competent nor sympathetic. It is true that his achievements have been portrayed by the greatest of all military historians. But Napier's volumes are occupied with too many events to throw such light as we should wish on the character of his great commander. Nor, when we wish to study the course of the Peninsular campaign is Napier's history an altogether satisfactory

guide. He gives but small space to details, and although the broad features of the battles and manœuvres are described and criticised with extraordinary insight and brilliant eloquence, yet there are many gaps in his narrative, and many incidents, of minor interest perhaps from his point of view, which he purposely left obscure. Of those who have made the biography of the Duke their sole subject, Brialmont and Gleig have been the most successful, but the military portion of their interesting work is much inferior to Napier's. Hooper, a fine writer, was not a soldier. Moreover his consistent depreciation of Napoleon's genius, arising, it would appear, from an inability to dissociate the soldier from the man, as well as his stubborn refusal to admit that Wellington ever made a single blunder, do not commend his works to the impartial reader.

The same prejudice, the same blind admiration, disfigure the greater part of the voluminous literature on the campaign of 1815. The majority of writers appear to consider it essential to take one side or the other. They must be either English, or French, or Prussian, arrogating all the ability and courage to their own general and their own people, allowing no virtues to their enemy, and but few to their allies. The battle of the pens has been as fierce as the battle of Waterloo itself; and it was not till General Maurice set the example that the subject was approached in a more philosophic and a fairer spirit. And of late years Waterloo seems to have occupied the entire field. The campaigns of the Peninsula have been neglected; Wellington with them. Lord Roberts' sketch of the Duke's military career is the only biography which has recently appeared, and, unfortunately for his brother-soldiers, 'The Rise of Wellington' is no more than a sketch. I may be permitted to say, therefore, that there is no thoroughly satisfactory Life of the great Duke in existence.[1] No attempt has been made to derive lessons for all time from the record of his achievements, or to examine in detail his strategy, his tactics, his methods of discipline, and his system of command. No Mahan has yet taken the subject in hand, and until some

[1] It must be remembered that Sir Herbert Maxwell's 'Life of Wellington' had not appeared when these notes were written.—Ed.

successful soldier, who has himself had experience of high command, with all its responsibilities, does for Wellington what Lord Wolseley is doing for Marlborough, we shall have to be content with making the best use we can of inferior writers. It is to give some small assistance to those who care to make such writers their study that these notes have been written. While drawing attention to the importance of such study, I propose to point out some few of the valuable lessons to be derived from it, and to make clear, so far as I can, those broad principles, both of strategy and tactics, on which Wellington consistently acted, but which are consistently lost sight of by the historian.

More than this I shall not attempt. I shall certainly not criticise the operations of the Peninsular or Waterloo campaigns. When the Duke was an old man, he one day found himself opposite Apsley House, and the street between alive with traffic. A gentleman who happened to be passing offered his arm to pilot him across, and after they had reached the other side, the Duke thanked him for his assistance. He was not, however, to be easily shaken off. Hat in hand, he expressed in high-flown language his gratitude at the honour which had been done him by the hero of so many battles. The Duke, who was very deaf, listened for a moment, and then, catching his meaning, rapped out, 'Don't be a d—d fool, sir,' and walked off at his best pace.

In that particular class of fools it would not be unjust to class an ordinary soldier who should dare to pass judgment on the hero of Waterloo.

Nor do I intend to touch—except incidentally—upon the Duke's career previous to the Peninsular War. His Indian campaigns are undoubtedly most instructive, and were not without their effect on the destinies of our Eastern Empire. But it is with the great struggle with Napoleon that his fame is more intimately connected. The stage was larger than India, and the issues involved of far greater moment, not to England alone, but to the world at large. It has been said, and with justice, that the most critical period in English history, and not in English history alone, but in European history, is comprised in the thirteen years from 1802 to 1815. Not when the huge

hulls of the Armada darkened the Channel, nor when the splendid armies of the Grand Monarch threatened invasion, and his navy passed and repassed unmolested along our coasts, was the danger more imminent. Let us consider for a moment the political situation when Wellington was first assigned to a command in the Peninsula. Napoleon was practically master of all Europe. The tricolor waved in almost every European capital; Austria, the great German Monarchy, had been decisively defeated; Prussia, the kingdom of Frederick the Great, had been crushed to the earth; Italy was practically a province of France; Holland and Belgium her dependencies; the Russians had been driven back to their own inhospitable wastes; Spain, although unconquered, had surrendered her capital and her chief cities, and a Marshal of France held his Court in Lisbon. Never had one European state, since the days of Rome, attained such overwhelming power as France, and to enforce the Emperor's behests there stood behind him an army which had never known defeat, and which in the Peninsula alone included 200,000 veterans. And what were the means of resistance? The raw levies of Spain, ill armed, ill disciplined, and ill commanded; the militia of Portugal, and 17,000 British soldiers. But behind this handful of armed men stood Sea-Power. Great as was the strength of Napoleon, his influence extended not a foot beyond low-water mark. The land was his and the people, the cities of Europe and their commerce; not a village on the Continent but felt the terror of his name; yet wherever blue water rolled the flag of England still floated in proud defiance; and beyond the horizon of the ocean, which even the eagle glance of Napoleon was unable to penetrate, the storm was arising, although the cloud as yet was no larger than a man's hand, which was to sweep away his dominion like the unsubstantial fabric of a dream.

It was not the least of the Duke's laurels that he should have perceived, in 1808, at the moment when Napoleon's power was at its height, the spot where that power was most vulnerable. Fortunately for England, the Ministry, when they resolved to deliver the counter-stroke which Trafalgar had made possible, had listened to the advice of their young general. In

opposition to their own ideas, he had advocated a landing in Portugal. In that rugged but fertile kingdom, inhabited by a small but independent race, he saw that an impregnable base of operations might be established; that, under the care of English officers, a Portuguese army might be created; that on this distant and difficult theatre of war, bounded throughout its length by the high seas, the Spanish revolution might be most effectively supported, and a conflict waged which might eventually exhaust the strength of France. It is impossible not to notice, from first to last, how clearly he grasped the secret of England's strength. In all his correspondence the same idea rules his conceptions, the immense influence that may be exerted by the State, even if her army be relatively insignificant, that commands the sea. It is true that he had had experience of maritime expeditions. On no less than six occasions, before he landed in Portugal, he had had to do with the transport of large forces across the ocean, and several times he had been called upon by the Government to submit plans of campaigns which involved a landing on an enemy's coast. There can be no question whatever that he was fully alive to the enormous strategic advantages which accrue to the army that has the sea behind it. He knew that under such conditions the influence an army can exert, with facilities for changing the line of operations, and for receiving supplies and reinforcements, is out of all proportion to its numbers; and his views may be commended to those who, because European armies are of such enormous size, believe that the intervention of English troops in a Continental war is an idle dream. Let it be remembered that the English army of 1808 was almost as small, compared with that of France, as it is to-day; and that the substitution of steam for sails has given a force based upon the sea a mobility which has been hitherto unknown.

One of the first of German strategists, long employed in Turkey, has fully recognised the length of England's arm. He compares Wellington's occupation of Torres Vedras with the crisis of the war of 1877–8. 'The French' (marching on Lisbon, and brought up by Torres Vedras), 'when almost touching their object, were too weak to completely attain it.

From the moment that this became clear, the turn of the tide in the Peninsular War—indeed, in Napoleon's career—began. A similar thing would have happened if the Turkish armies, after the loss of Plevna and the line of the Balkans, had retired to, and made a firm stand at, the position of Czataldcza, which extends from sea to sea, west of Constantinople. The Russian army, arriving in a reduced condition, would neither have been able to capture the intrenched lines, nor to envelop or turn them, especially if England had decided to help the Porte, not only with diplomatic notes, but also with troops. A hostile fleet could have annoyed the assailant on both flanks, and an allied army could easily have been assembled in the fortified quadrilateral on the Danube, still in possession of the Turks; and the advance of such an army would have made the retreat of the victors necessary. There is no case in recent military history in which a situation—although apparently a hopeless one—which upon close examination afforded all the means for a brilliant rescue, has been so completely overlooked.' We may be permitted to believe, then, that those who would restrict the English army to colonial enterprise have not fully realised the extent of the influence of the sea-power, and that even the most brilliant writers on Imperial defence have something to learn from Wellington.

And it was not in numbers alone that the English army of 1808 was relatively feeble. In the first place, it was totally wanting in prestige. Not only by Continental nations, but by its own people, it was considered incapable of meeting such troops as Napoleon's. The descendants of Marlborough's soldiers had never recovered the reputation they had lost in America. Since the wars of the French Revolution had begun they had been often engaged; but they were more familiar with retreat than triumph. Alexandria, Maida, and Corunna were the only victories over European troops, and these were insufficient to balance the long tale of disasters. Nor is this want of success a matter of wonder. The men were brave and hardy, the battalions well-drilled, and there was no lack of confidence. But brave soldiers and well drilled

battalions do not make an efficient army; and an army, in the real sense of the word, England had not.

The force which landed in the Peninsula was deficient in the first elements of organisation. The commissariat was a skeleton, and the officers who controlled it were without experience. The hospital service was utterly inadequate to the needs of the troops. There were neither ambulances, nor pontoons, nor army parks; there was no siege train, no ammunition column, and there were no engineers. Both staff and officers were inexperienced; the majority of the rank and file had just been drawn from the militia; the cavalry was very weak; the guns were drawn by bullocks; and the majority of the generals, appointed for any other reason than proved capacity, had yet to learn their trade. It was of this heterogeneous mass that the Duke had to create an army capable of encountering the war-seasoned soldiers of Napoleon. And the process was attended with constant friction. The discipline of the army, although the punishments were terribly severe, was anything but good. The men broke out into excesses of the worst kind at every opportunity, and mutiny was the only crime at which they drew the line. An examination of the army 'states' still kept at the Record Office reveals the astonishing fact that desertion was almost as frequent in Portugal as in England, and the insubordination of the officers is shown by the files of court-martials.

Nor was it till late in the war that the Duke commanded implicit confidence. In the earlier campaigns, so long as he led them to victory, the army was ready enough to cheer him; but when reverses came, when it became necessary to retreat before the overwhelming numbers of the French, to decline battle, and to take counsel rather of prudence than audacity, its temper changed. The men grumbled, and the officers criticised. Subordinate generals were loud in their expressions of disapproval, and some, returning home on leave, filled the ears of their influential friends with complaints of their chief's incompetence. And added to this flood of misrepresentation came the abuse of the Press and the ravings of the politicians. Those who at any future time may have the direction of

English armies may find consolation in the thought that never was a successful general vilified, mistrusted, and disliked like the greatest of English soldiers. None was ever more thwarted by the Government; none had fewer friends or fiercer critics.

And yet throughout it all the Duke was immovable. With every officer in the army, even those more able men who knew his worth, against him, he still held fast to his purpose of holding Portugal. When the troops grumbled at his inaction, and demanded to be led to battle, he steadfastly refused to indulge their wishes. He was betrayed into no outbreak of temper. As patient under calumny as unmoved by success, he treated his detractors with contempt, laughed at his insubordinate officers, and submitted with equanimity to the eccentricities of the Government. Great man as he was, it may be questioned whether his strength of character, his self-control, and his extraordinary power of bearing responsibility, ever showed to greater advantage than at this period of his career.

Then, as at every other period, his confidence, not only in his own ability to hold his ground, but that he would finally bring about the downfall of Napoleon, is most remarkable. That confidence, however, was based on no flimsy foundation. He was a comparatively young man, still under forty, when he assumed command in the Peninsula, and he had no large experience of European warfare. He had served in the disastrous campaign of 1794 as a regimental officer, and he had commanded a division at the investment of Copenhagen in 1807. But in very many respects his Indian experience was more valuable than any he would have gained upon the Continent. In India he had to improvise armies; to arrange every detail of administration; to organise the staff and the departments; to make the troops mobile; to pay them and to feed them, and to keep them in health. In India, too, he had been accustomed to deal with questions of government and finance, of statesmanship and diplomacy; and this varied and wide experience must have done much to strengthen an intellect already powerful. If one quality more than another is conspicuous in Wellington's mental armoury, it is the

power of thinking clearly, and thinking deeply and thoroughly. He was a most voluminous writer, necessarily so, for his correspondence with the different Governments he had to deal with was enormous; but it is difficult to find a single despatch in Gurwood's volumes which does not treat the questions at issue, whether strategical, financial, or diplomatic, in an absolutely satisfactory fashion. And many of these despatches were written under the most unfavourable conditions, in miserable quarters, after a long march, or even after a great engagement. It is not unusual to hear Wellington spoken of as the personification of common-sense. And the assertion is true enough, if by common-sense is meant practical ability, the ability which both conceives and executes, and which in the soldier, if allied with a strong will, and properly cultivated, is very near akin to military genius.

It is a truism to say that no man can become a great, or even a good, soldier unless he has been endowed by nature with certain characteristics—coolness, resource in danger, presence of mind, and the power of bearing responsibility—and these indispensable attributes are not derived from education; but it is not always understood that common-sense, or practical ability, if it is to be useful in war, must be trained on the right lines. And to supply this training Wellington, from the first year he joined the service, was always careful. He was exceedingly observant both of men and things. No new discovery, in science or in mechanics, escaped his investigation. As he himself told one of his chief officers, it was his invariable habit to give up some hours daily to the study of his profession. He read all the best military writers of the time, and his despatches and correspondence reveal to us how wide the extent of his reading was. His brain, therefore, when he was placed in independent command, was thoroughly well trained; he had not permitted it to rest; he had not been content with the knowledge that suffices for the regimental officer; he had endeavoured to qualify himself for higher things, and when his time came for great responsibilities, he proved himself capable of bearing the weightiest burden that ever fell on a general's shoulders.

To strategy, then, he had paid much attention before he came to apply it in the field, and the principles on which he consistently acted, although they differ but little from those of the other great masters of war, are well worth record, especially as great misconception exists as to what those principles were. The popular idea is that his was a Fabian system; that he never fought unless absolutely certain of victory; that he preferred the defensive to the offensive, and that, in one word, he was pre-eminently cautious. This opinion, however, will not be held by those who, when studying his campaigns, give due weight to his difficulties, and work out his operations with map and compass. I think they will agree with me that his strategy, although seldom rash, was pre-eminently daring. This characteristic has undoubtedly been obscured by the fact that for the first four years of the Peninsular War his means were so small that he aimed at nothing more than the defence of Portugal; secondly, by the number of defensive battles, due to paucity of numbers, that he was compelled to fight; lastly by the defensive attitude, forced upon him by the situation, at Quatre Bras and Waterloo, and by the shallow criticism of foreigners. Not yet has he been forgiven for defeating Napoleon and avenging Ligny.

The plain truth is that his genius was eminently aggressive. He was always on the watch for an opportunity to attack, and it is a most significant fact that he never fought a defensive battle without apologising for it. Wellington, be it remarked, had seen something more of war than manœuvres and the war-game. No general was ever more alive to the preponderating force of the moral element, and no general ever surrendered the initiative more reluctantly or sought to regain it with more persistence. Wellington knew well that the issue of battle lies in the hearts of men—in the heart of the commander even more than in the hearts of the soldiers—and that human nature, even when disciplined, is peculiarly susceptible to a strong, sudden, sustained attack. Moreover, his temperament was naturally ardent and impetuous. He was not an Irishman for nothing. Putting aside his Indian achievements, as an instance of his boldness we may cite his advance on Lisbon in 1809.

Landing in Mondego Bay with 9,000 men, he at once determined to attack Junot, who had 20,000, and only unexpected circumstances placed him on the defensive at Vimiero. The campaign of the Douro and Talavera was, as regards conception, of a piece with Napoleon's campaign of 1796. His enemy was far superior in numbers, but had divided his forces. Soult was at Oporto, and Victor in the valley of Tagus. Marching with great rapidity, eighty miles, over rough roads, in three and a half days, he made the famous passage of the Douro, a splendid tactical achievement of the most audacious character, and then turned upon Victor. The deficiencies of his commissariat and the lethargy of his allies interfered with the success of his design, and instead of attacking, as he proposed, at Talavera, he was reduced to the defensive, and his victory was, consequently, indecisive. Again, his capture of the twin fortresses, Badajos and Ciudad Rodrigo, in 1812, was so audacious as to have been characterised, even by his own officers, as the height of rashness; and passing by the operations on the French frontier in 1813–14, his occupation of the position at Waterloo was criticised as foolhardy by Napoleon, himself the most daring of generals. This is a circumstance that has been very generally overlooked. The historians hardly seem to appreciate the full bearing of the situation. We are asked to believe that Wellington's chief merit lay in the selection of his ground, in the skill of his tactical disposition, and in the stubbornness of his defence. I cannot think, however, that his tactics were more admirable than his strategy.

On the morning of June 17, when he resolved to retreat to Waterloo, he was aware that the Prussians, who were mostly young troops, had been beaten at Ligny; that Napoleon had, before that battle, over 120,000 men, and that he himself had, all told, 68,000, of whom only 31,000, including the King's German Legion, were British. Yet he retreated from Quatre Bras with the full determination of standing at Waterloo, and of fighting Napoleon's army, if Marshal Blücher would come to his assistance with one army corps: that is, with a heterogeneous force, largely composed of untrustworthy contingents, and relying on such aid as might be rendered by a young army, that had

been defeated but two days previously and had retreated by night over wretched roads, he dared to face a victorious army which might be far superior in numbers to his own, far better supplied with artillery and cavalry, and commanded by the greatest general that modern ages had known. And this on a position which was eminently favourable for the massing of artillery and the manœuvres of cavalry. Had Marshal Blücher failed to redeem his promise, as he well might have done, considering the state of the roads and the exhaustion of his troops, and the battle ended in a French victory, Wellington would in all probability have been put down as absolutely insane. But at Waterloo, as elsewhere, his strategy was the result of profound calculation. It was undoubtedly risky; but if risk is to be always avoided, nothing great will be achieved, and the Duke was never averse to risk so long as the chances were in his favour.

So far, then, from Wellington's strategy being of a timid and over-cautious character, the exact contrary is the case; but, at the same time, his patience was inexhaustible. None knew better how to play a waiting game; none was ever more resolute to fight only on ground of his own choosing and at his own time. And when we consider his temperament, naturally inclined to quick and energetic action, the pressure put upon him by the army, the politicians, and the newspapers, and last, but not least, the extreme aversion every fighting soldier must feel to retiring before the enemy without a trial of strength, it will be admitted, I think, that here he was especially admirable. His principles were those of the greatest captains. He did not enter upon a campaign with the idea of awaiting attack in a strong position, for such an idea rests on a false conception of the first principles of war. The aim of every general is to concentrate superior force on the field of battle; thus only can he hope for decisive results. And to concentrate superior numbers strategy must be vigorous. If the enemy divides his forces each separate portion must be crushed before they can concentrate. If he keeps his forces in hand he must be compelled, by skilful manœuvring, to separate them. If, however, he remain concentrated, the inferior force has nothing for it but to fall back to a strongly entrenched position, as Wellington did to Torres

Vedras, or to a zone of manœuvre, as Napoleon did in 1814, and await its opportunity. Such, broadly and briefly stated, is the whole secret of strategy; and it is evident that in dealing with an enemy in detail a defensive attitude cannot be adopted. The grand object is to prevent the enemy from concentrating, from receiving reinforcements, and from gaining time, and attack is, consequently, the only possible course of action for the superior numbers, except under most unusual conditions.

I now come to the Duke's tactics; but before describing them a few words of explanation may not be out of place. It is possible that the doubt may have suggested itself whether it is worth while to discuss the methods of what have been called, so far as weapons are concerned, the prehistoric ages. Is any instruction to be gained, it may be asked, from the dispositions for the attack at Vittoria, or for the defence at Waterloo?

I hope I shall not be considered exceedingly unpractical, lagging hopelessly in rear of modern thought and modern progress, if I say that, in my humble opinion, the campaigns of Wellington, not in strategy alone, but in tactics also, are prolific in instruction; even should I emphasise this assertion by declaring that if, instead of accepting the Germans as infallible, we had, when we started to learn on what principles we should make war, sought instruction from our own great soldiers, we should have pursued a more profitable course. It is perfectly true that both in strategy and in tactics important modifications have been brought about by modern science. In the one we have to take into account steam and the telegraph, in the other a vastly increased fire-power. But steam and the telegraph have hardly touched the grand principles of strategy; they have only introduced new means of applying them; nor have modern weapons wrought a complete change in tactics. The bayonet is now subordinate to the bullet. A long preparation by fire is now absolutely essential to the success, and both the formation of infantry in the attack and the action of artillery are governed by different conditions from those which prevailed in the Peninsula.

But just as the attack is not the only phase of tactics, so infantry formations and artillery action are not the sole consideration, nor even the most important consideration, in the

attack. On other phases of tactics, and on the more important considerations in the attack, the campaigns of the Peninsula throw just as much light as the campaigns of 1870–71. To define my meaning. In the selection of a defensive position to-day we look for exactly the same features as in the time of Brown Bess, with the one exception that we demand a wider field of fire. Otherwise, as regards cover, the protection of our flanks, lines of retreat, and lines of communication, we are guided by the same principles as our forefathers. Moreover, as regards the distribution of infantry and artillery along the front, the delivery of local counter-strokes, and even as regards the delivery of general counter-strokes, the conditions have not greatly altered. Nor have modern firearms changed either the formation of cavalry or the work of the independent cavalry which precedes the army. Outposts are still established on the system which obtained in the Peninsula, and, above all, the enemy is deceived, outwitted, and outmanœuvred by exactly the same means as were adopted by the great generals of the pre-breechloader era. I would lay special stress on the fact, which none can gainsay, that human nature, the paramount consideration of all questions of either tactics or strategy, remains unaltered. And the art of generalship, the art of command, whether the forces be large or small, is the art of dealing with human nature. Human nature must be the basis of every leader's calculations. To sustain the *moral* of his own men; to break down the *moral* of his enemy—these are the great objects which, if he be ambitious of success, he must always keep in view.

It is this aspect of war, then, that those who aspire to become real generals should study. This aspect remains unchanged, and nowhere can it be studied with more profit than in the campaigns of those great captains, who owe their greatness to the one fact, that it was the mainspring of all their actions. It should be remembered, too, that while attack formations and development or avoidance of fire are a part of the soldier's daily training, taught in the drill-books and practised at manœuvres, neither the drill-book nor manœuvres throw much light on the way human nature is to be dealt with.

When once an officer has mastered the theory of formations, and understands the effects of fire, the means of producing those effects, and also of reducing them, he cannot do better than study the Indian and the Peninsular and the Waterloo campaigns. There he will learn how to outwit, to outmanœuvre, to deceive, in one word, to surprise his enemy, and, as has well been said, 'Surprise is the deadliest of all foes,' a more terrible instrument of war than even the Lee-Metford rifle or the Maxim gun. There he will find teaching that will rectify the false lessons of manœuvres; for manœuvres, where the moral element is altogether absent, are not a real picture of war, nor even an approach to it. I cannot conceive anything more useful to a soldier than to be thoroughly imbued with the methods of Wellington. What could be more valuable than to have learned so thoroughly that their application has become instinctive the following principles:—

Always endeavour to mystify and mislead your enemy, whether you are attacking or defending; if you can surprise the enemy's general his army is already defeated.

Always attack at that point where the moral effect will be greatest. Strike the enemy's flank in preference to his front, enfilade his line, and threaten his retreat.

Never fight except on your own ground and at your own time.

Never attack unless you are superior in numbers.

Never knock your head against a strong position.

Such maxims may seem truisms, and to put them forward mere idle repetition. I cannot agree, and I will give a reason. In our Indian Empire different conditions have imposed a different set of rules upon every second lieutenant:—'Never refuse battle,' 'never show a sign of hesitation,' and 'when you get the enemy on the run keep him there.' I am convinced that the constant repetition of these principles, and their very general recognition, have left their mark on our roll of victories; and it would possibly increase that roll in the time to come, when we meet more formidable foes, if the principles on which Wellington acted had become the general rule of conduct throughout the army.

To describe in detail what those principles were is impossible. I can only direct attention, in very general terms, to those which are specially prominent. I have already said that his instincts were eminently aggressive; but, whether marching to attack the enemy, or waiting in a selected position for the chance of a counter-stroke, his one aim and object was to mislead and mystify his enemy. It is true that he did not invariably succeed; but, at the same time, it may be questioned whether any general, even Napoleon himself, ever brought about so many startling surprises. The passage of the Douro, the capture of Badajos and Ciudad Rodrigo, Graham's flank attack at Vittoria, the passage of the Adour: each and all of them were absolutely unexpected by the French marshals; and they are by no means the only, or even the most conspicuous, instances. Was ever general more surprised than Marshal Massena when, pursuing his retreating enemy through Portugal, in full anticipation of 'driving the leopards into the sea,' he suddenly saw before him the frowning lines of Torres Vedras, the great fortress which had sprung, as it were, from earth at the touch of a magician's wand? Nor in all his long career was Napoleon ever so completely deceived as when he found the allied army in position at Waterloo, apparently at the mercy of his victorious veterans.

It is not from the pages of English writers that we learn to appreciate the extraordinary skill with which the Duke concealed his movements, and deceived both friend and foe, but from the despatches and correspondence of the French generals who were opposed to him. Despite their experience of war, their system of spies, their excellent cavalry, far superior, during the first years of the war, both in numbers and in training, to the English, it was very seldom, indeed, that they had more than a vague knowledge of their adversary's movements, his intentions, or his strength. Neither in Germany, in Italy, in Belgium, nor in Holland, had they ever encountered so mysterious an enemy. If they stood to receive battle they were deceived by feints and demonstrations; their attention was drawn away from the real point of assault, and the decisive blow delivered where they least expected it. Nor

was it on the offensive alone that he managed to surprise them. In this respect his defensive dispositions are a model for all ages. Always, under such conditions, the weaker army, for if he were superior he invariably attacked, he made such use of the ground that neither his numbers, the extent of his front, the position of his reserves, nor even the position of his first line, could be easily determined. Cover was made use of, not only to save his men, but to conceal his dispositions, to lead his enemy into ambush, to induce him to make false movements, and thus to create the opportunity for effective counter-stroke. Consider for one moment the embarrassment of the French marshals when they found their cavalry checked at the foot of a long ridge. Except a line of skirmishers, half way down the slope, with a few batteries of artillery in support, there was nothing to be seen. It was impossible to detect the extent of the English line, for outlying detachments, pushed far out on either hand, stood in the path of the patrols. No shelter-trenches, standing out against the sky line, defined the front. The attack, for want of a target and objective, could not be prepared, and there was nothing for it but to take the bull by the horns and launch the columns of assault, in the vague hope that they might encounter inferior numbers. I venture to think that as regards the occupation of a defensive position, there is more to be learned from the practice of Wellington than from the theory of the drill-books.

It has been said that he did not make sufficient use of his artillery. He certainly did not sacrifice his guns in the vain hope of overpowering a superior artillery; and, as he was well aware that infantry is the arm which must bear the brunt of the defensive battle, in the choice of ground the gunners had to give way. The first requirement of a position, to his mind, was cover for his battalions, and protection from the artillery fire of the enemy. And what were the results of his consistent regard for concealment and surprise? When the French attack was launched not a single English infantryman, except the skirmishers, had come under fire. The battalions were in perfect order, and their ranks were full, and the counter-stroke, made with fresh and unbroken troops, was quickly decisive. So much did these

tactics impress the French generals, that at length they hesitated to attack at all. On the morning of Quatre Bras, when that most important position was but thinly held, even Ney was reluctant to engage. That there were very few troops to be seen was, in the judgment both of himself and his subordinates, no proof whatever that the whole English army was not hidden away in the woods and valleys, and the opportunity was suffered to escape. We may recall the Duke's criticism, on this same June 16, of the Prussian dispositions at Ligny. Blücher occupied a strong position; but his troops were posted where every man could be seen, and where the first line, at least, would be exposed to artillery fire. On his return from Ligny to Quatre Bras he said that he had expostulated with the Marshal, but that the old hussar had replied that his Prussians liked to see their enemy, and, added the Duke, 'they will get most damnably mauled.'

Whether as a strategist, tactician and organiser the Duke may be fitly compared with Napoleon can never be fairly settled. But it is always to be remembered that, as the general of a suspicious and parsimonious Government, with small powers, small support, and still smaller resources, he had far greater difficulties to contend with than the supreme master of a great and wealthy nation.

It has been said that his operations lacked the brilliance of Napoleon's. Personally, I do not exactly understand what is meant by this word 'brilliance.' If it means manœuvres which were utterly unexpected by either friend or foe, I can only say that, with inferior means, Wellington effected just as many surprises as did the conqueror of Europe, and it was due only to the inferiority of those means that they were so seldom decisive. It may be admitted, however, that, although he gained the implicit confidence of his troops, he had never the least hold on their affections, and here, it seems, he was distinctly inferior to his great rival. But, says Sir Edward Hamley, 'This is a question on which his fame in no way depends. The same regard which his countrymen felt for him in life, and which they continue to feel for his memory, rests on sure and sufficient grounds. They knew that he was a good

and a great man. They were proud of his deeds and virtues. They loved his personal dignity, his manliness, his simplicity and strength. Their confidence in his judgment and sagacity was profound, and they were assured that those pre-eminent qualities were placed absolutely without reservation at the service of the State, unbiassed by the hope of popular applause, or the fear of popular censure. In him, too, they believed they saw an embodiment of the national spirit in its best aspect—the spirit which, in its most practical aims, is directed still by the noblest influences. Recalling the memory of mighty conquests and of great successes, that good grey head, with its halo of former glories, stood amid the latter times like the peak of a prolonged world. Thus it was that he passed through life in a charmed circle of deference, as if surrounded by an invisible bodyguard of his victories; and when he died, at an age when most men have long receded from the public regard, he was mourned for as universally and sincerely as if he had still been in the freshness of his fame, and had but yesterday delivered Europe.

'His body lay in the old castle for a time, while the people came to look on his well-known face. Then his remains were taken through London by night, to lie in state at Chelsea; and the Queen came, first of the mourners, to look upon the remains of her trusty counsellor and greatest subject. The spontaneous mourning of the people lent solemnity to the funeral splendour in which England sought to express her respect; and great assemblies have rarely felt such profound and general emotion as that which shook the multitude when, amid the cathedral gloom of St. Paul's, deepened by the storm that beat upon the dome, the coffin of "the high and mighty Prince," whose long list of titles had just been recited, and whose form was so familiar, descended through the pavement to the vault beneath. With it seemed to vanish some of the force and majesty of England, and much of the old traditionary loyalty and reverence for authority which yet continued to leaven the utilitarian character of the age. But he left to his country a rich inheritance—the increase of a reputation abroad, which sprang from his achievements and his policy, and the gain at home which a people derives from a noble example and a great name.'

And, if I may be permitted to add my feeble words to this most eloquent tribute, he left to the army a special legacy. Throughout the whole of his career he had been the most obedient of subordinates. Loyalty to his superiors, whether statesmen or soldiers, was the first rule of his life. Whether he approved their action or not, he invariably supported them, and he never permitted himself to criticise. The most bitter remark he ever made was after the battle of Vimiero, when the interference of a stupid superior, who had just come upon the field, held him back from a pursuit which must have proved decisive. 'Gentlemen,' he said, turning to his staff, 'there is nothing left for us but to hunt red partridges.' Further than such caustic speech he never went. That a soldier should criticise his superiors, either in public or in private, did not square with his ideal of an officer and a gentleman. In the age in which we live it is well sometimes to think of these things. It would be untrue to say that loyalty has diminished, nor is there any lack of patriotism. But it is impossible to deny that a most mischievous spirit is abroad. Men seem to have forgotten that loyalty is not only due to the Crown, but to the State, and to those that represent the State. To defy the Government, to make its task more difficult, to force it to break treaties and to deny obligations, and to embarrass our relations with other Powers, appear to be considered most praiseworthy actions; while to vilify those in high places, the great functionaries of the realm, is held to be no longer a stain on the honour of an Englishman. It may be useful, then, when such doctrines find advocates, to remember the example of Wellington, and to determine that whatever may be the case elsewhere, the army will still preserve the same traditional loyalty, the same reverence for authority, as did the greatest soldier of us all.

CHAPTER VI

MILITARY CRITICISM AND MODERN TACTICS

MILITARY criticism takes a long time to recover its equilibrium. The practical effects of a new explosive, an improved firearm, or a novel formation, no matter what the circumstances, are sufficient to drive it to extremes. Such was the case when the Seven Days' Campaign of 1866 first drew general attention to the capabilities of the breechloader. General Maurice long ago made allusion to the fact that in June 1870 it was stated, during a discussion at the Royal United Service Institution, that the strength of the defensive had been so much increased by the introduction of a quick-loading firearm that France needed no more than 100,000 infantry to defend her frontiers. Translated from the Institution papers, this unfortunate attempt at forecast appeared in a French review two days after Gravelotte!

This tendency to over-estimate the value of a new development has been but lately exposed in a fashion sufficiently remarkable. In the Secession War, American soldiers revived an obsolete arm; and, under circumstances which were exceptionally favourable, used it with remarkable success. Fifteen years later the Boers taught English soldiers that they had overlooked at least one of the lessons of the American campaigns; and in 1889, after the mounted infantry had done good service against enemies who had either very indifferent cavalry or none at all, the Infantry Drill Book laid down that it might 'usefully be employed' in the scouting and patrolling of an advanced guard. Already had able critics—amongst them Colonel Valentine Baker—pronounced against the possibility of employing cavalry in battle except against cavalry alone; and now, when a substitute was found upon the outpost line,

its occupation appeared to have gone indeed. And then, suddenly, the pendulum swung back. When, at manœuvres on the Berkshire Downs, a battalion of mounted infantry was asked to manœuvre independently against a regiment of hussars, its commander declared that in an open country, without cavalry to reconnoitre for him, he was helpless; and for the above-mentioned paragraph a sentence was substituted to the effect that mounted infantry may be employed 'under exceptional circumstances,' to provide information, and to ensure the security of an advanced guard; these exceptional circumstances existing, we may presume, only when cavalry is not available.

But although this would-be rival has found its level, and no more is now claimed for mounted infantry than, in Lord Wolseley's words, 'to save the cavalry from having to dismount and adopt a line of fighting which is not theirs,' the question of the employment of cavalry on the field of battle is still suffering from impatient criticism. Neither its officers nor those who help the arm to do its thinking are to blame. It is true that the cavalryman of to-day cherishes a well-founded hope that his share of glory will not be confined to screening or scouting, nor even to the overthrow of the opposing squadrons side by side with the sister arms. The extreme depression induced, after 1870, by the slaughter of Woerth, of Mars-la-Tour, and of Sedan, has at length passed away, and buoyancy has been restored. But this desirable consummation has been reached by no hasty process. By none have the tactics and the tactical situations of 1870 been more patiently investigated and more thoroughly discussed than by writers on cavalry. At the same time, new developments have been fairly faced, the problems of the future, so far as is possible, carefully examined, and ample evidence collected to show that, in this instance also, criticism has overshot the mark. It is not the cavalry, then, who are to blame. It is not the writers who represent them that have shirked difficulties or discounted history. With them special pleading has found no favour, but with a certain school of infantry tacticians, of whose views the writer of an article in the 'United Service Magazine' is the latest exponent. 'These

military Nihilists, who swear that the action of cavalry on the battlefield is a thing of the past,' have, naturally enough, based their deductions on the War of 1870. But in their anxiety to prove that infantry have nothing to fear from horsemen, they have looked upon the battles of that war as if they had been games of chess; they have underrated the effect of bad tactics and unsuitable ground; they have disregarded the indications of the moral influence of cavalry, even if ill-handled; and not only have they minimised the tactical successes actually achieved, but have used their utmost endeavours to demolish theories which the cavalry never dreamt of putting forward. But the writer alluded to betrays an uneasy consciousness that he has by no means proved his case. The very earnestness with which he strives to inspire his own arm with a contempt for cavalry shadows forth an apprehension, unacknowledged, perhaps, even to himself, that cavalry, boldly led and skilfully manœuvred, may be a real danger even to the staunchest infantry. In the last century, says the author of the 'Cavalry Division,' 'infantry was never charged except when it could be surprised and taken in flank.' It is within those limits, *i.e.* the surprise or flank attack of exhausted infantry, that he, together with those who have faith in *l'arme blanche*, claims that cavalry can still exert a powerful influence on the fight; and, at the same time, he lays stress on the fact that the long fire-fights of the present are more destructive of the moral and physical energy of the infantry than the close-quarter conflicts of the past. His opponents, in producing a long array of arguments to prove that cavalry are useless against unbroken and forewarned infantry, are but tilting at windmills. That men on horses are no match for men on foot, with confidence in their weapons, in good heart, and expecting the attack, has been apparent since men were first drilled and disciplined. No cavalry soldier dreams—nor ever did dream—of supporting so wild a proposition. The most ambitious cavalry soldier asserts no more than this: that, although weapons have improved, human nature still remains the same, and that 'surprise is still the deadliest of foes.' Nor need infantry officers fear that the recognition of these facts will be aught but beneficial to their own

arm. It is well to teach the men in the ranks with the rifle that, holding their ground and keeping cool, they are a match for the most daring horsemen; yet to inspire the infantry generally with a contempt for cavalry may improve its *moral*, but will most assuredly lead to a neglect of those precautions which alone can secure it from surprise. 'The less cavalry are supposed to be able to act,' says General Maurice, 'the more numerous will be the chances presented to them.' We do not attempt to strengthen the *moral* of our infantry by telling them that the enemy's fire is harmless. On the contrary, we point out its terrible effect, and inculcate the methods by which it may be avoided. Let all know when and where cavalry is to be feared, and they will be better prepared for the eventualities of battle than were they to go down to the fight full of a confidence which one day might be rudely shattered. Better trust to stout hearts, strong discipline, and incessant vigilance than to *moral* strengthened in dubious fashion.

Such false teaching as that set forth in the article alluded to has, moreover, the result of weakening the reliance of our own infantry on our own cavalry. As a most useful element of moral support this reliance should not be rudely tampered with. Nor does such teaching exercise other than a baneful effect upon combined tactics. Let both arms recognise that situations may arise where the enemy's horsemen will be the chief danger to infantry and artillery, and the cavalry will be at pains to detect such situations, as well as to learn in what manner they can there render the most effective support. Let both arms recognise that tactical successes won by our own horsemen will not be decisive unless the infantry is at hand to follow them up; and the latter will learn how, when the cavalry has opened the way, it may best improve the opportunity.

The first duty of cavalry in action is to drive the hostile horsemen from the field; but despite the arguments of its detractors, it has a second duty—that is, active participation in the struggle of the infantry and artillery for the key of the position. The principal lessons of the Franco-German war as regards this last phase of action are these: first, in order

to attain or to prepare the way for enduring results, cavalry must be used in large masses; and, secondly, without skilful leading, good use of ground, and ready initiative, it is of little value. Given these essentials it will go far towards redeeming the reputation which it lost in 1870. But it is idle to expect cavalry, deprived as it is of the employment of fire, to achieve great successes unless it is efficiently supported—that is, unless its strokes are delivered in close combination with those of the other arms. Infantry officers, therefore, will find useful employment in the study of combined tactics, especially as regards the methods by which their own arm may best profit by the address and valour of their mounted comrades. Nor would it be amiss were they to reflect on the means of preventing cavalry arresting a strong attack or counter-stroke. It may be true that the French cuirassiers were almost annihilated before Morsbronn, but they gained time for the infantry to withdraw unmolested to the Niederwald. It may be true that it was Bazaine, and not von Bredow, who stopped the advance of Canrobert's corps against the exhausted Prussian left at Mars-la-Tour; but it cannot be gainsaid that the death-ride of the six squadrons held back the attack for a precious breathing-space. It may be true that at the same battle the three squadrons of the Guard Dragoons lost fifteen officers and ninety-seven men in their onslaught on the French brigade that was bearing down upon the Prussian rear, but it is a fact that the enemy never again attempted an advance on this side, and that time was gained to bring up reinforcements to the threatened point. Such are the results that may be attained by cavalry, even when unsupported. Costly, indeed, they are, but well worth the sacrifice. And be it remembered that owing to the obstacles at Morsbronn, the absence of cover at Mars-la-Tour, and the unbroken ranks and unshaken bearing of the opposing infantry, the conditions in each one of these cases were as unfavourable as possible.

They must be difficult of conviction who in the face of such evidence depreciate the influence of cavalry when backed up by the other arms. Moreover, in the time to come, if the peace practice of Continental nations goes for anything, not

six, but six times six squadrons will be sent on such errands as Bredow's at Mars-la-Tour, and not one line, but two or three, will break through skirmishers and batteries and ride down upon the reserves in rear. Nor will this mass of horsemen be unsupported. Infantry and gunners will not stand gazing, open-mouthed and idle, at the wild conflict at the front, but will be pressed forward at their utmost speed, secure for a time from fire, to pour in through the breach thus opened by the horsemen.

Let us remember, also, that the moral influence of cavalry is as great as heretofore. In his report of the fight at St. Privat, Major-General von Kessler, who commanded the 2nd Guard Brigade, hints that, when the attack came to a standstill, the distant appearance of a squadron or two of Chasseurs d'Afrique on the flank of the fighting line had a demoralising effect on a portion of the troops. Von der Goltz, also, has a significant passage in 'Das Volk in Waffen': 'The cavalry will again play its rôle in deciding the day. This claim is, for the most part, justified by the recollection of certain situations in the late wars ['66 and '70–'71]. . . . The lines of sharpshooters were seen to dissolve under the fire, to become thinner and thinner, and, in their endeavours to surround the enemy, to extend, disperse, and become ragged. Their energies had become exhausted in advancing through thick corn or underwood, in climbing hills, in a breathless charge, following immediately a long march, and the evolutions of compact masses across country. The ammunition had almost given out, many officers had fallen, command nearly ceased altogether. There arose in the hearts of many who saw all this the fearful question: how if the enemy's cavalry appeared on the flank, and careered over the battlefield? It would, without more ado, sweep away the wreck of the infantry! When, in the evening of Mars-la-Tour, the dusk descended, and scarcely anything could be discerned of the infantry on the wide battlefield, and the great mass of artillery in the centre, more than 100 guns, stood defenceless, a similar thought arose in our breast. It appeared impossible to check a resolute charge of cavalry that might have hurled itself upon these batteries.'

The tactician who suggests the method by which Napoleon's grand principle of using the three arms in combination at the decisive moment may be applied to the conditions of a modern battlefield will do good service. To imitate exactly the methods of Austerlitz and Borodino, of Rosbach and Salamanca, may be impracticable; but, if the principles of tactics be immutable, they may still be applied, though after a different method, and those who have refused to slavishly accept the doctrine which, after 1870, relegated the cavalry to a secondary position have made the first step in the right direction. Look at it how we may, we must needs confess that in the European wars of the past half-century the combination of the three arms has been far inferior to that which characterised the tactics of the great captains who have long since passed away.[1] Nor can we accept the excuse that development of fire has driven combination, even in a less degree, for ever from the field. It may be more difficult, but von Bredow, absolutely unsupported, and without aid from circumstance, showed us at Mars-la-Tour that the cavalry has not yet been deprived of all its vigour, and the general who first masters the art of bringing the action of each arm into close co-operation will initiate a new era in the art of war.

The Germans have long ago recognised that if, in 1870, the artillery and infantry worked in with each other in a manner that left little to be desired, the cavalry did not do its full share on the field of battle, and the present experiments in the employment of cavalry in masses as vast as those commanded by Seidlitz or Murat are but an attempt to give the foot soldiers and the gunners that effective assistance which decisive victory demands. It has been objected that so costly is our cavalry, and so few in number as compared with the mounted arm in Continental armies, that an engagement in which they were unsparingly used would leave the British army without sufficient force to carry out the essential duties of screening and reconnaissance. But opportunities for decisive

[1] It is pertinent to the argument set forth in the succeeding pages to notice that in 1882, both at Kassassin and Tel-el-Kebir, the English cavalry was most effectively employed.

action on the part of cavalry are not of such frequent occurrence as to give this objection weight. Either the ground is unfavourable, or they are retained on the flanks by the presence of opposing cavalry, or the resolute bearing and skilful conduct of the enemy's infantry, even though defeated, give no opening. Take the seven battles of the Metz campaign. On two occasions only did the nature of the country offer scope to the mounted arm, at Mars-la-Tour and Gravelotte, and on the later date the exhaustion of the Prussian Guard before St. Privat gave the only fair opportunity for a successful charge. Take the Peninsular battles. Salamanca was the only field where Wellington's horsemen found room and opportunity to engage with success the opposing infantry. At Fuentes d'Onoro Marmont's cavalry had space to act against the battalions of the English right as they withdrew from their first position. But Montbrun, the commander, was no Kellerman to profit by the confusion of the moment, and yet this was the only chance offered to the leaders of the French cavalry during their long years of warfare with the Duke. Take the campaigns of Napoleon, a captain who never hesitated—save at Borodino, where, although the victory was incomplete, the Imperial Guard was held back in reserve—to engage his last man and his last horse. In few of his many battles were his cavalry asked to charge unbroken infantry full in front. Before Austerlitz, Marengo alone saw his horsemen employed unsupported to carry out the crowning act of conflict. Of his later actions, four only, Aspern, Wagram, Borodino, and Waterloo, called for supreme efforts and gigantic sacrifices. And at the two former the horsemen were employed to gain time, as were von Bredow's squadrons at Mars-la-Tour, or the French cuirassiers at Woerth; at Borodino and Waterloo they were ordered to attempt a task before which the infantry had quailed. To employ the cavalry either to gain time or to act as a substitute for the infantry may be characterised as an expedient of despair. It is an expedient, destructive indeed, but one which has been but seldom resorted to in the past, and the necessity for its adoption is not likely to arise more often in the future. Active participation in the battle does

not entail the same reckless expenditure of life, but it requires something more than resolute courage; it requires the quick *coup d'œil* that enabled Murat and his colleagues to choose their own time and place for striking in, and, whilst doing their full share in the work of victory, to secure their squadrons from annihilation. That this will be more difficult and more costly in the future may be admitted. Cavalry can no longer be held in readiness within a few hundred yards of the enemy's line. But the opportunity will still come, as it did at St. Privat. If we have but a small army, strength must compensate for lack of numbers; and the strength of an army is its power of combining its whole force in a single blow. One great victory is less costly than a series of indecisive battles, and to win a great victory, to become master of every opportunity, our generals must have in their cavalry an auxiliary that can act as skilfully and as resolutely in the centre of the field against opposing infantry as on the flanks of the battle against the opposing cavalry. To do either it must be imbued with the self-devotion of von Bredow, and with that confidence in its own powers which critics of the school already spoken of are doing their best to undermine.

Moreover, in their anxiety to destroy the idea that cavalry is a foe to be feared, these critics have not only failed to extract the true meaning of the tactical facts of 1870, but, intent on a single object, have overlooked the latest developments of the mounted arm. Accompanied by mobile infantry cavalry has acquired an independence to which it has as yet been a stranger in European wars. Its offensive strength has expanded, and, at the same time, it has been supplied with the defensive capacity it has hitherto lacked. The author of 'The Cavalry Division' has pointed out that the turning movement of the 3rd French Corps at Gravelotte was held in check, first, by the charge of the Guard Dragoons, and secondly, by the presence of the 5th Cavalry Division on the extreme flank; and it has been said that at Gravelotte had du Barail's division, posted throughout the day behind St. Privat, been employed in the same manner, the decisive turning movement of the Saxons might at least have been delayed long enough for the

French Imperial Guard to have come up into line. With cavalry and horse artillery alone, it is suggested, the deployment of the Saxons might have been made at least a tedious process, and perhaps protracted until nightfall. Had a force of mobile infantry lent its aid, the difficulty and delay would certainly have been greatly increased. Here is a new field for consideration. How is the mass of infantry and artillery, employed in a wide turning movement, to secure a rapid deployment and perhaps a change of front in the face of a force composed as above?

If the real value of the mounted arm be once recognised, infantry critics will find in problems of the like nature a new field, and the proper combination of the three arms—a question that has been somewhat lost sight of in the storm of arguments for and against the use of cavalry in the shock of battle—will once more assume the prominence it deserves.

But it is not the cavalry alone that has to complain. The infantry has also been made the sport of theory. So startling were the phenomena which followed the introduction of the breech-loader into battle, so radical the changes it involved, that the earliest exponents of the new art of fighting appear to have believed that the first principles of tactics were already obsolete. They set themselves to create a system *ab ovo*, and in their anxiety to develop the power of the improved firearm ignored altogether the teaching of the past. The extraordinary elasticity of the company column impressed those who had seen it employed in 1866 and 1870 to such a degree that the dangers it brought with it were overlooked. Even Marshal von Moltke, in his 'Influence of Firearms upon Tactics,' committed himself to most curious logic in order to prove the efficacy of the new formation. Taking the Alma as an instance, he first of all demonstrated the inferiority of the line to the column; and then, after describing the disadvantages of the latter, without a single word of explanation, quietly summed up to the effect that the company column was superior to the line! Recent wars have indeed given us no reason to doubt the justice of his conclusions. The company column, indeed, in one form or another, has been everywhere adopted as the

best means of maintaining the strength and energy of the fighting line. But our contention is this: that it was too hastily accepted, that its disadvantages were never pointed out, that no endeavour was made to secure to the new formation the sound principles of that which it superseded. If there is one principle more than another which is important in war, it is that in unity there is strength. For this maxim the Germans substituted one of contrary tendency. They broke up the attacking line into a number of small bodies, acting independently, although with common impulse. There was no attempt to combine elasticity and cohesion.

Instead of 'slowly broadening down, from precedent to precedent,' infantry tactics underwent a violent revolution. The old order was utterly discarded. It was asserted that the old doctrines had had their day, that the experience of centuries was a dead letter, and that the company column was the spell with which to compel success. The battles of 1870 served rather to confirm than to dispel the illusion. The new formations were never tested by a strong and well-sustained counter-stroke, although the result of offensive returns on a small scale indicated what the result would probably have been. And they were never tested for this reason: the tactics of the French army had been framed in accordance with theories even more one-sided.

An unprejudiced examination of the methods of the Franco-German war reveals the fact that the infantry on both sides suffered from theories that were, to say the least, injudiciously formulated. It may be that these theories were carried far beyond what the authors intended. It may be that the advocates of wholesale reforms had no thought of putting on one side fundamental principles; that, whilst founding their demonstrations 'on the nature of the arm' they still held in mind that victory now, as heretofore, depends on moral influences, the most telling of which is the strength imparted by unity; but it is none the less true that the very vehemence of their arguments in favour of the new order obliterated in the minds of those who followed them the very recollection of those immutable rules of warfare which had hitherto been their guide.

There is little doubt that the remarkable work of Captain May, 'The Tactical Retrospect of 1866'—discredited as it was by the supreme authorities, had an extraordinary effect on the leading of companies and battalions in 1870. And, whilst the startling doctrines there set forth as to the absolute independence of the subordinate leaders had much to do with the dispersion of units and the difficulties of command in the battles of August and September 1870, the well-known pamphlet of Prince Frederick Charles, 'On the Art of Fighting the French,' was directly accountable for even greater evils—for the reckless impetuosity of the German officers of every rank. Such was the general impatience to anticipate the enemy, to seize the initiative, and to force on him the defensive, that it almost seems as if the *furia Francese* was a veritable nightmare.

In both theories there was, nevertheless, a large germ of truth. The company column certainly does give elasticity to the attack; and it is absolutely necessary under rifle fire, breech-loading or otherwise, that the subordinate leaders should be given a free hand at the moment when the zone of effective fire is reached, for from that moment higher control is, generally speaking, absolutely impracticable. But it was not necessary that the line of battle should be broken up into company columns at the moment of deploying, often far beyond the zone of effective fire; it was unwise to make the company column the tactical unit, for such was the practical result of deploying battalions, brigades, and even divisions in line of company columns, without leaving any reserve whatever in the hands of the commanders; and the feeling that the subordinate leaders had so free a hand as to be almost encouraged to lose touch of their own battalions, and to embark on independent enterprises, was exceedingly prejudicial to decisive success. Even Moltke himself complains that the maxim 'Aus der Tiefe zu fechten' was generally neglected, and that the entry into battle usually degenerated into an impatient rush. The Red Prince, too, was in the right when he urged before his comrades-in-arms the importance of the initiative, the power of the offensive, and the necessity of anticipating the French onset.

But it may be doubted whether he commended in his heart the blundering into battle which was seen at Woerth, at Spicheren, at Colombey, and at Gravelotte. Had not the French leaders been so influenced by Marshal Niel's theory, again true in itself, that the proper tactics for an army carrying the breech-loader was to remain on the defensive until the enemy had shattered himself against an invulnerable front, they would have remembered that to take immediate advantage of the enemy's mistake is the true practice of war; they would have remembered that the flank is generally the weakest point, and the disciples of the royal soldier would have paid deeply for their temerity. It has been said by a great tactical authority that, so far as his reading goes, such a thing as a normal battle, that is the battle of the text-books, where due preparation and fitting dispositions precede the assault or the defence, very seldom occurs. Now, this is a dictum which it is impossible to deny. In war, more than in aught else, 'the best laid schemes gang aft agley.' But it by no means follows, because it is impossible to attain the ideal, that the principles on which it is based should not always be held in mind. The Franco-German War was certainly remarkable, it may almost be said singular, for the absence of normal battles. There are few, if any, actions in which a deliberate plan, either of attack or defence, had been conceived before the troops came into collision. The state of chaos which the advance school of theorists, already spoken of, had wrought in German tactics, was, perhaps, the chief cause that made the Metz campaign so unlike the campaigns of Wellington and Napoleon. But the extraordinary shortcomings of their enemy had much to do with the eccentric leading of the victors. Never was seen in any disciplined army such absolute neglect of precaution, so inactive a cavalry, so complete a disregard of the value of time. Except at Gravelotte—and even there the troops at St. Privat were still waiting for their entrenching tools—the French were always unprepared. Even at Woerth, although MacMahon had already fortified and manned the position, de Failly was not yet up. It was the abnormal unreadiness of their enemy that, in part, induced the Germans to depart from ordinary procedure.

Three times in fourteen days, at Vionville, on the left at Gravelotte, and at Beaumont, the German advanced guards found themselves within range of the French camps, the tents still standing, the men engaged in cooking, and the whole force without the slightest suspicion that the enemy was in the immediate neighbourhood. Such opportunities gave no time for precise arrangements, for concentrating the troops before attack, or marshalling them in battle array. Moreover, at Vionville strategical necessities dictated immediate action. At Beaumont the tactical situation was equally imperious. But at Spicheren and Colombey it was the vaulting ambition or the too eager daring of the subordinate generals which initiated the risk and confusion which characterised these two battles.

At Woerth the dislocation of the Crown Prince's plans was due rather to the fact that from his position far in rear at Sultz he was unable to control the ill-concerted enterprises of his advanced guards. At Gravelotte, again, the battle of the right wing was begun, contrary to the instructions of Moltke, by the commander of the 33rd regiment, who, on his own volition, attacked the advanced post of the French in the Bois de Genivaux.

In the war of 1866, also, impromptu engagements were more frequent than deliberate encounters; but the Austrians suffered from the same shortcomings as did the French in 1870: lack of reconnaissance and incapable leaders. Surprises were the rule rather than the exception; and, moreover, the Prussians, striving to gain room for deployment in the open ground beyond the mountains, were compelled to attack the hostile posts, which maintained so slack a watch over the defiles, without hesitation or delay.

Such were the circumstances which hindered the battles of these two campaigns from being conducted in normal fashion; and although it is idle to argue that such circumstances will not recur, that the enemy will never lay himself open to surprise, or the advanced-guard leaders always act with circumspection, it must be acknowledged that, with these shortcomings rectified pitched battles—that is, engagements where both sides have sufficient time to make preliminary dispositions—will again

become the rule; and German tacticians are careful to inculcate the importance of a deliberate entry into action.

Because the breech-loader was the most effective factor in both these wars, a belief appears to have arisen that its introduction has rendered impracticable the deliberate and carefully prepared attacks of large masses of men. It is true that long-range fire has diminished the control of the superior leaders. It is no longer possible for the commander to bring his troops to within so short a distance of the enemy that, when launched on the objective, his subordinates have no space wherein to wander from the true direction; but if due precautions be taken to reconnoitre far to the front, and the value of preparation and of unity be thoroughly realised, it will seldom happen that time will be lacking to devise a plan of battle or to make fitting arrangements for its prosecution. Take the campaigns of the greatest soldiers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the soldiers who were tacticians as well as strategists—Marlborough, Frederick, Napoleon, Wellington, and Lee. In how many instances were they compelled to fight unprepared? Not one of them, save on very rare occasions, was taken at such a disadvantage as to be prevented from marshalling his troops in such order as best befitted the circumstances, and of meeting the enemy, either when attacking or on the defensive, with his whole strength. Frederick, indeed, was surprised at Hohenkirch. At Busaco, had Massena obeyed Napoleon's rule and been present with his advanced guard, Wellington, in all probability, would have been defeated. For some reason which Napier makes no attempt to explain, 'the position was only half occupied, and the allies were moving with the disorder consequent on the taking unknown ground, when forty thousand French infantry and a large number of batteries crowned the opposite ridge.' Lee, too, cautious almost to a fault on the defensive, neglected to entrench his left at Mine Run, when confronted by the Army of the Potomac in October 1863, and two Federal corps, nearly equal in number to his whole force, had already been massed opposite this point when the impending assault was countermanded. But these are the only instances. The necessity for immediate attack without waiting for supports,

a proceeding which destroys all symmetry of action, which sends units into the struggle on an abnormal front, renders impossible the retention and decisive employment of the reserve, and reduces superior leading to a minimum, will probably occur in the future as in the past.

But, whilst we may rate at its true value, under such circumstances, that spirit of energetic initiative which the Germans are so sedulous to foster, the dangers of the abnormal, that is—the accidental battle—should also be given their due weight. If the confusion, and the but partially decisive results consequent on that confusion, which the battles of 1866 and 1870 display are to be avoided, the general-in-chief must be allowed time to frame and to communicate his plans, to point out the various objectives, and to dispose his troops in accordance with the scheme of attack or of defence that he has conceived. Thus only will the purpose of battle be fulfilled: the annihilation or demoralising defeat of the enemy's army. Regarding the question from the broader point of view, it is interesting to note the methods of the two greatest English-speaking generals of the nineteenth century, Wellington and Lee. Both having indicated to their subordinates the space they were to occupy in the line of battle and the tactical objectives they were asked to seize, frankly surrendered into their hands the further conduct of the fight. Wellington on the defensive, taught, perhaps, by the danger of the rash counter-stroke of the Guards and Germans at Talavera, sternly forbade all local offensive action beyond the limits of the position. Lee, probably from the more extensive front of battle which he had to superintend, was content to leave the decision of limit to the judgment of his lieutenants. 'During the battle,' wrote Lee, 'my direction is of more harm than use; I must then rely on my division and brigade commanders. I think and I act with all my might to bring up my troops to the right place at the right moment; after that I have done my duty.' Moreover, both these commanders appear to have instilled into these same lieutenants a wholesome apprehension of bringing on accidental battles.[1] Nor did they find it impossible to make

[1] With the exception, perhaps, of Craufurd, the famous commander of the Light Division.

their orders explicit without at the same time hampering their subordinates.

This faculty seems to have been somewhat lacking in 1870. At Spicheren, on August 6, even the commander of the First Army, General von Steinmetz, had no knowledge of the ultimate intention of the Commander-in-Chief, which was to delay the crossing of the Saar until the 9th. For two days frequent reports had come in from the cavalry that the enemy was preparing to retreat. The unaccountable evacuation of the Saarbrücken ridge, covering the bridges over the frontier stream, heightened the impression; and the commander of the 14th Division, having occupied the abandoned position, took upon himself the responsibility of attacking the hostile troops that faced him on the Spicheren heights. These he believed to be but a small rearguard. In reality, they numbered 27,000. The Prussian force was increased during the course of the day to 30,000, but had Bazaine and his subordinate commanders acted with greater promptitude a French reinforcement of 30,000 men might easily have been brought on to the field. The Official Account, determined to do nothing to discourage initiative, discovers that 'the independent action of the 14th Division was perfectly in unison with the spirit of German generalship, which directed every effort to hanging closely on the adversary.' That this partakes somewhat of the nature of a *suppressio veri* may be suspected from the fact that on the following day, when it was uncertain whether the French were retreating or had taken up a fresh position near Bouzonville, the advance of the infantry, set in motion by von Steinmetz, was stopped by a direct order from the King, and the task of keeping touch assigned to the cavalry alone. Again, at Gravelotte, as the author of 'Das Volk in Waffen' has pointed out, the leader of the 9th Corps, who was intended to maintain a demonstrative action against the enemy's front until the turning movement should be developed, was not explicitly instructed to this effect, and hence came about the premature engagement of the corps, the losses and the withdrawal of its fourteen batteries.

These criticisms are made in no carping spirit. But whilst we may admire to the full the excellence of the Prussian organi-

sation, the soundness of their system of practical training, their magnificent discipline, the self-devotion of the officers, their superabundant energy, and their unshrinking acceptance of responsibility, it is, of all things, unwise not to recognise their faults. None are readier to do so, now that the majority of the great leaders of 1870 have passed to a bourne where criticism is powerless to annoy, than the Germans themselves. No more scathing stricture, not only on tactical procedure but on the bearing in battle of both officers and men, has ever been published than the pamphlet of German origin, 'The Summer Night's Dream,' which appeared in the United Service Magazine.

'The time,' says Laymann, in the 'Frontal Attack of Infantry,' written after 1870, 'which is spent in making good dispositions and introducing the attack is never lost. . . . The least we can do is to make the most careful preparation, in order to secure the greatest possible chance of success.'

'Whenever it is possible,' says von der Goltz, 'the advance of a well-ordered development of the forces should precede entrance into fire. . . . A careful arrangement of the battle secures the simultaneous and collective employment, if not of all forces, yet of the major part of them. It spares much bloodshed, and, in the course of battle, readily recoups the time it has cost. . . . The action of the future,' he adds, 'will demand more thorough preliminaries, a clearer comprehension of the object to be attained, a more careful arrangement, a more intimate co-operation of all three arms, and the simultaneous employment of all available troops to decide the combat.'

It is not without reason that attention has been drawn to the methods of war as practised by Wellington and Lee. After the war of 1870, and its stupendous successes, a school arose amongst us which saw nothing but perfection in the army and the methods of the victors. It is difficult to get rid of the idea that the very warmth of the opposition which the new ideas excited drove these critics to extremes. That the opposition was strong is certain; but looking back at the conflict, now that the excitement has passed away, it seems as if both parties were partially in the right. The one cried with truth that a reform in tactics was absolutely necessary; the other, with

equal truth, that its opponents had forgotten that there were 'fortes ante Agamemnona,' and great wars before 1870. In the minds of some was, perhaps, working the unconscious feeling that what Wellington had handed down was not to be lightly discarded. The experience of the Crimea and of the Mutiny taught others—and there was much experience in the ranks of the British army—that in the disorder, the precipitation and recklessness of the new methods, lurked the seeds of great disasters; and the majority of English soldiers were loth to throw away, at the bidding, as it were, of a foreign nation, the heritage of tactical skill which is the birthright of our race.

Neither in England nor in America did the new theories meet with aught but a grudging acceptance. And the instinct that withstood them was sound to the core. For many a century we have been proud apprentices to war, and it is not strength nor courage, pride ourselves on them as we may, but sheer tactical adroitness, the quick perception of the means to the end, the mingled *finesse* and resolution which success demands, that have wrought our triumphs both by sea and land.

To the mingled strain of Norseman, Celt, and Saxon we owe that combination of staunchness on the defensive and *élan* in the attack to which even the greatest and bitterest of our enemies paid a generous tribute. But such attributes are not sufficient of themselves, and to whatever era of our national history we refer we shall find that they have been supplemented by the tactical skill which was necessary to their full development. It is true that victory has not always been constant. The memory of our ignominious expulsion from the Low Countries in 1792 was obliterated by the triumphs of the Peninsula. But neither the disasters of the war of the American Revolution, nor the defeats which marked the war of 1812, have a place in our catalogue of failure. Inflicted by an enemy who was flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, they can no more be cited as a proof of our inferior aptitude for war than Bannockburn or Prestonpans. 'Pares aquilas, et pila minantia pilis': our own were the hands that smote us. The same tenacity which retained the ridge of Waterloo retained, with Howe and his troops in possession of

Philadelphia, the defiant American battalions in their winter camp at Valley Forge, dwindling slowly and exhausted, but still unable to recognise that they were beaten. The same quick perception which immortalised Torres Vedras, and taught our generals how to destroy the columns of the French, raised the entrenchments of Bunker's Hill, extemporised the defences of New Orleans, and taught the colonial levies that their only chance of coping with the well-drilled battalions of the English army was to imitate the tactics of the Indian and the snare that had been laid for Braddock.

To English soldiers of the present generation, who are accustomed to have held up to them the supremacy of Prussia in all things warlike, this may appear a startling assertion. But if history be examined it will be found that it is an assertion susceptible of proof. From Cressy to Waterloo, from Sluys to Trafalgar, from Plassey to Tel-el-Kebir, the same characteristic is always present. To what do we owe the successes of the Peninsula? Principally to the line formation, and its superior development of fire; secondly, according to General de Ségur, to the manner in which the defensive positions were occupied. It was the custom of other nations with whom the French fought to man the crest of the position, and he relates that not only were their troops thus exposed to artillery fire, but that when the attacking column ascended the slope the bullets of the defenders passed over their heads. The British troops, on the contrary, were generally posted at musket-range in rear of the crest. Here they suffered little from the hostile guns, and when the attacking column surmounted the hill it was received with a heavy frontal and overlapping fire, and was then charged with the bayonet. Again, although it is a fact which is often disregarded, the Peninsular army won even more victories when attacking than defending, and here the line played an all-important part. Wellington's formation for attack was in several lines, following one another in close succession; and it is worthy of remark that it was in all probability an instinctive adherence to traditional methods that won the Alma. The formation in three lines, due rather to the memory of Salamanca than to any set purpose,

forced of itself the way to victory. These were the tactics, then, that defeated the conquerors of Europe, and they were by no means novel. In the days of Marlborough, as in those of Frederick, the line was the normal order of battle. When the majority of nations, after the outbreak of the French Revolution, saw fit to break entirely with the past, and to imitate the columns that had worsted them, England held fast to her traditions, meeting the new tactics by modifications of her system, extending the front by employing two ranks instead of three, and shielding the thin line, whether in attack or defence, by a cloud of skirmishers. Prussia, on the other hand, although she still retained the linear tactics of Frederick the Great at Jena and Auerstadt, employed no skirmishers, and the men still stood three deep. At Wagram, also, the Archduke Charles marshalled his Austrians in line, but again without those modifications which gave the formation sufficient strength to oppose the onset of the French.

It is a curious fact that none of the French marshals in the Peninsula nor Napoleon himself at Waterloo attempted any other method of attack except that of deep columns, preceded by skirmishers, against the English. Neither the formation in small battalion columns, nor continuations of line of column, giving a broad front of fire as well as weight for the charge, which had been the rule up to Austerlitz, and had been resuscitated by Napoleon in 1814, were ever employed. It may be noted, however, that both at Alexandria and Maida they failed; and so the English tactics, combining the elasticity of the new order with the vigour of the old, proved superior to the tactics of the nations who disdained reform as well as to those of the French who had altogether discarded the experience of the past.

It has already been implied that the Americans in the Revolutionary War gave proof of their kinship, although the method of showing it was scarcely fraternal, and the Secession War is strong evidence that years of separation have in no wise impaired the aptitude they then displayed. With a regular army of less than 20,000 officers and men, possessing no more experience of service than that won in the Mexican campaign of

more than twenty years before, and in punitive expeditions against the redskins of the western border, the nation found itself plunged into a conflict on the vastest scale. And yet, despite the absolute ignorance of war and its requirements which existed amongst the mass of combatants, despite the lack of experience, the tactics of the American troops, at a very early period, were superior to those of the Prussians in 1866. In organisation and in discipline there were gross shortcomings; in strategy, controlled as it was by the Government and not by the military chiefs, grave errors were committed; but on the field of battle the racial instinct asserted itself. The success with which from the very first the cavalry was employed on the outpost line puts to shame the inactivity of the Prussian horsemen in Bohemia; and, whilst the tactics of the Prussian artillery against the Austrians were feeble in the extreme, the very contrary was the case in the Secession War. If the necessity of preparing the way for the assault by silencing the enemy's guns, and shaking the *moral* of his troops by a heavy bombardment, was not always realised, the batteries, nevertheless, were always massed when the ground permitted, and so early as Bull Run we find the gunners on both sides rendering effective support to the infantry by boldly pushing forward into the fighting line. Nor were the larger tactical manœuvres even of 1870 an improvement on those of the American campaigns. In many respects they were identical; flank attacks and wide turning movements were as frequent in one case as in the other; and not only were the victors of Sedan anticipated in the method of attack by successive rushes, but the terrible confusion which followed a protracted struggle, and for which Prussian tacticians still despair of discovering a remedy, was speedily rectified by American ingenuity. That the American troops, acting on the offensive, were not called upon to face so formidable a weapon as the chassepot is true enough; the effects of fire were not felt at so great a range, but their tactical formations were far better adapted to preserve cohesion than those of the Prussians. Moreover, if it be asserted that such formations were impossible against the breech-loader, there is no doubt whatever that the Americans made more careful

preparations for attack, were far more zealous to re-form the ranks after every phase of battle, and, whilst developing a broad front of fire, kept within proper bounds the initiative of their company commanders. An American officer, speaking of the extraordinary intermingling of units and the delay in rallying at Königgrätz, writes as follows: 'The German troops were green in 1866. American troops of 1865 would have assembled much quicker. But in 1862 the Americans would have been nearly as slow about it as the Germans.'

Nor is the fact that the tactical capacity which is claimed as the birthright of both English and American soldiers has been found wanting in individuals a valid argument against its existence in the mass. Many a man is a soldier in name who is morally unfitted for command. There are men so bound by regulation and method as to have lost all power of initiative, who are incapable of assuming responsibility, whose only guide in battle is the Drill-book, and who have lost the ability of adapting principles to circumstances.

Moreover, tactical instinct seldom acts by inspiration. It is seldom possible, when confronted by an enemy who employs novel and unexpected tactics, to devise on the field the best means of meeting them.

To maintain that every Englishman or every American is naturally a better soldier than any Frenchman or any German would be ridiculous, but that a capacity for conquest is inherent in the English-speaking race it would be useless to deny. Whether this attribute is the gift of Providence, whether it is the outcome of climate, of freedom, or of blood, is a question with which we have no concern; it is enough that it exists, and we have, therefore, no need to ask another nation to teach us to fight, nor are we bound to accept the 'Tactics of 1870' or the German 'Field Exercise' of to-day as infallible and conclusive.

But, at the same time, we cannot afford to despise the experience of others. As regards the tactics to be employed against a civilised enemy, we have scarcely sufficient personal data on which to build. To understand the moral and physical effect of modern firearms, to recognise the dangers that beset a

modern battlefield, the obstacles that we shall there meet with, the enhanced difficulties of command and of manœuvring, we must turn to recent history, and with recent European history, so far as war is concerned, we have fortunately had nothing to do. It would be unwise, moreover, not to give full weight to the conclusions at which Continental critics, practically enlightened, have arrived, but it is not essential either to assent to or to adopt these conclusions.

We have to prepare for war under present conditions, and we must prepare for it on certain definite lines; but judgment should be suspended until we have mastered the experiences of the breech-loader battle, until we have considered the effects of differences of organisation, of discipline and *moral* which exist between ourselves and others, and have decided whether deviation from principles and methods, which not tradition merely, but success almost unvarying, has hall-marked, is justified or not. To quote General Maurice, 'the less we imagine we can dispense with any of the lessons of the past, the sounder our conclusions will be. Such is the fashion after which we should exercise the critical faculty, and, fortunately, the instinct which leads to sound conclusions is present to preside at our deliberations.

The echoes of the triumphal march of their returning army had hardly died away 'Unter den Linden' before the Prussian soldiers of '71 began taking stock of the methods by which they had been making history. They found, in the first place, that successful infantry attacks, generally speaking, had been carried out by swarms of skirmishers; that the only way of gaining ground, when once the zone of effective fire had been reached, was by feeding the skirmishers with constant reinforcements; and that, in a hotly contested battle, battalion had to be piled upon battalion in order to maintain the firing line at full strength.

Now the outcome of such methods as these, as Boguslawski says, was a return to 'the combat of savages, who, fighting without any regular order, rush in masses upon the enemy, wishing to come as quickly as possible to single combat.' And he further confesses that 'such a dispersion of the combatants does not contribute to our control over the fight nor to its

quick conclusion.' But these methods, with all their disadvantages, had been successful, and by the Prussians they were accepted as the true tactics of the breech-loader battle. Extreme disorder was held to be inevitable; and for a long time the only improvements suggested were a stricter fire-discipline and constant practice in fighting in a medley of different companies, battalions, and brigades. No change in formation was advocated. A single line of skirmishers, fed by the constant accession of small bodies from the rear, remained the normal disposition for infantry on the offensive.

These tactics were diametrically opposed to those that had been hitherto taught in England. The Prussians held that, not only was the attack to be prepared, but that the assault was to be carried out, by the skirmishers. A second line, except as a means of feeding the firing line, they considered useless. Our own authorities, on the other hand, held that the duty of the skirmishers was merely to cover the advance of the main body, which, moving shoulder to shoulder, was to pass through the firing line and carry the position with the bayonet.

So soon as the experience of the war of 1870–1 began to be discussed in England, the two schools of critics came into violent opposition on the question of the infantry attack. The first favoured Prussian methods. The second held fast to tradition. The first, so far as numbers went, were much in the minority. The second had, perhaps, less skilful advocates; and, moreover, the details of the Franco-German battles were not then sufficiently known to enable them to overthrow arguments, which their antagonists based on incidents of the recent struggle. The conflict between these two opinions is a matter of ancient history. It is, nevertheless, interesting, not only as an instance of the tendency of criticism to touch extremes, but of the value of an instinctive regard for the lessons of the past. It was not that the more conservative school considered reform unnecessary, but it held that our former tactics were based on sound principles, principles that had withstood the practical test of many years of warfare and were not now to be lightly thrown aside.

There is no need to refer to text-books or theorists; the

details of the Peninsular battles show us practically what was the traditional attack formation of the British infantry. (1) As a preliminary disposition, the troops were divided into three lines before they were set in motion. (2) The objective of each division was clearly indicated, either by direct instructions, or by the division being placed opposite that point of the enemy's position which it was to assault, and being allotted a space in the line of battle that it could adequately cover, and no more. (3) During the attack itself, the skirmish line was given a free hand, and the leaders of units were allowed to act on their own initiative. So fully was this last necessity recognised, that General Maurice, in his Wellington essay, says that the regulations of 1870, based on the old skirmishing tactics, 'although introduced before skirmishing had attained its present importance, appear to be compiled on as sound principles as if all the experience of the Franco-German war had been before the writers.' What these tactics were may be gathered from Napier's account of the operations of the Light Division on the Coa. 'Here, as in every other part of the field, the quickness and knowledge of the battalion officers remedied the faults of the general. . . . There was no room for a line, no time for anything but battle. Every captain carried off his company as an independent body, and joining as he could with the 15th and 52nd, the whole presented a mass of skirmishers, acting in small parties and under no regular command, yet each confident in the courage and discipline of those on his right and left, and all keeping together with surprising vigour.' (4) The second and third lines in close order behind the skirmishers maintained their tactical unity throughout the advance. When the position was carried, no time was lost in resuming the original formation, and the troops were in a position to prosecute a further attack, to follow up the enemy, or to check a counter-stroke. (5) The knowledge that strong supports were close at hand, and the very aspects of their solid lines and gleaming bayonets, not only added that element of moral strength to the attack which is above all things essential, but shook the *moral* of the staunchest enemy.

Such were the principles, putting aside for the moment the consideration that the bayonet was expected to be the supreme arbiter of the fight, of our offensive tactics. The first and most important of these was the formation in three lines, preceded by skirmishers. In this, as I have already stated, there was nothing novel. It is recommended by Vegetius, the most ancient writer on minor tactics. It was familiar to the Black Prince. 'Let us consider,' he said, when the French were reported to be advancing on Poitiers, 'how we can best receive them at advantage,' and the English army was then drawn up in three lines of battle. Marlborough found it sufficient. It was abandoned at Fontenoy, and with it victory departed. It was invariably employed by Wellington. It had become traditionary in England, and no English soldier had hitherto doubted its efficacy. It is scarcely matter for wonder, then, that the great majority of English soldiers refused to be convinced that the Prussian system, which, in almost every single respect, ignored the principles on which their own formations had been founded, could be anything but vicious. They were ready to admit that the new firearms had made modifications necessary, but they would go no further. They felt, truly enough, that the new methods absolutely invited the disorder which practical experience taught them was so great an evil, and that the evidence brought forward was scarcely strong enough to prove that there was no speedier means of carrying a position than by wearing out the defender by sheer stress of fire. However, the views of the reformers prevailed. The different editions of the 'Field Exercise' issued between 1870 and 1888 followed, to a great extent, the lead of the Prussians. The line of skirmishers and its supports became the fighting line. The second line was merely to be employed to stiffen the fighting line prior to the final advance on the demoralised enemy. The skirmishers were to give the *coup de grâce*. In other respects the views of the conservative school prevailed. The leaders of companies were not allowed the same independence as in Prussia; and the retention of a second line in the hands of the battalion commander, and its advance at the critical moment in full strength, was

calculated to preserve tactical unity and to render moral assistance at the right time. In 1888, however, although no new experience had been gained, and the introduction of the magazine rifle had even increased the power of fire, and had seemingly rendered further modifications necessary, the 'Field Exercise' appeared under a new title containing radical changes as regards formations for the attack and the method of its execution. Radical, that is, with respect to the theories of the Prussian school that had been accepted since the fall of Paris. But radical in no other sense, for the present tactics of the British infantry are essentially those that were advocated by the more conservative school when the necessity of modification was first recognised, and are based on the same principles which tradition had handed down to us as sound. The attacking force is once more divided into three lines, each with a distinct duty. The skirmishers no longer bear the title of the fighting line, and whilst they have still the most important part to play in beating down the enemy's fire and breaking down his *moral*, the bayonet has once more asserted itself.[1] To the second line, relying on the cold steel only, as in the days of the Peninsula, is entrusted the duty of bringing the battle to a speedy conclusion, and of inserting, in the midst of the enemy's position, a body of troops in such unity and order as to enable pursuit to be rapidly taken up, a further attack initiated, or a counter-stroke beaten back. To this point the pendulum has swung. It remains for us to examine whether the tactical instinct, which has been already claimed as peculiar to our race, is in consonance with the teaching of recent history.

The most remarkable phenomenon of the wars of 1866, 1870-1 and 1877-8 was the extraordinary intermixture of units which took place during the infantry attack. Now, it may be granted that even in the days of muzzle-loaders the same confusion was by no means unusual. But it is open to

[1] It must be remembered that this was written some years ago. Since then much has happened; but the bayonet, which was somewhat under a cloud as the result of the abnormal conditions of South African warfare, has again justified its existence in the Far East.—Ed.

doubt whether it has not been magnified by the advocates of the Prussian system. Colonel Gawler, one of the most reliable authorities as to the tactics of the Peninsula, asserts, indeed, that every stoutly fought battlefield saw men of different companies, of different regiments, even of different divisions, fighting side by side. But he refers only to the skirmishers. Colonel Home, again, brings forward the Alma as an instance. But the advance across the Alma, although made in three lines, was not conducted in the same fashion as the advance at Salamanca or Vittoria. In the first place, the troops of '54 were unpractised in the movements of large bodies, however well drilled they may have been in battalion. Secondly, the staff was equally inexperienced, and the front to be taken up by the first line was underestimated by a thousand yards. Thirdly, the troops moved forward in line for more than a mile. In the Peninsula, on the other hand, the advance was invariably made in line of quarter-columns until the zone of effective fire was reached. In fact, Wellington and his lieutenants knew that 'columns,' to quote Napier, 'are the soul of military operations; in them is the victory, and in them is safety to be found after a defeat. The secret consists in knowing when and where to extend the front.' Columns for the preliminary movement, line for the assault; a combination which assured strength, rapidity, and order, was the weapon of Wellington. Raglan relied on the line alone, and hence the confusion on the heights of Alma.

The Germans have preferred to recognise confusion as an inevitable evil, and endeavour to minimise it by training their men in peace to such control and obedience as is possible under such untoward circumstances. This they had done before 1870, and the system bore good fruit. To quote General Maurice, speaking of the great war: 'The distinction between the form in which the Prussians and French severally fought, after each had begun to realise the necessity for change, was not that the French were less scattered than the Prussians; on the contrary, they are expressly said to have been much more so. The distinction was this: the Prussian training had prepared them to be in hand though scattered. The French, unprepared

for any other use of skirmishers than an auxiliary one, were out of hand as soon as they were scattered.' With the system which wrought such sound results it is impossible to quarrel. It is one that is absolutely necessary. But it is well to ask whether it is all that is necessary. Is it not wise, whilst doing all in our power to evolve order out of disorder, to begin at the very beginning, and to endeavour to prevent that disorder assuming abnormal dimensions? The 'battle-discipline' of Boguslawski and other tacticians does not commend itself as a sufficient remedy even to their own comrades-in-arms. One German officer, at least, arguing from his own experience, has asserted, in no measured terms, his conviction of its insufficiency. In this respect there are few who are not disposed to agree with the author of 'A Summer Night's Dream.' It is his revolt against a procedure which has been instinctively condemned as vicious that has aroused so much interest in his revelations. At the same time his proposals for improvement have not met with approval. They ignore the fundamental evils of the German system of attack. They upset the modifications of the tactics of the pre-breech-loader era, which every school has accepted as necessary. They introduce others with which history and experience will have nothing to do; and they directly violate the principles which have governed infantry tactics since the wars of the French Revolution. In the first place, the author suggests that instead of the first line of attacking infantry being formed into a chain of skirmishers, allowing each man five feet in the ranks, it should be composed of a number of sections, each fifty strong, in single rank and in close order. His objection to extended order appears to be not so much that it produces confusion and the intermixture of units, but that it presents so many opportunies of skulking; and skulking, if his statements are to be swallowed, existed in the Prussian army of 1870 to a degree that was never heard of in a well-disciplined army of regular troops before or since. Now, extended order has been adopted as part of the infantry combat, not only, as the Drill-book, following Boguslawski, implies, because within a certain range

the advance in close order is no longer practicable, but for the following very excellent reasons:

1. Extended order is specially adapted to rapid movement over ground made difficult either by natural or artificial obstacles.

2. Fire action can be best developed in extended order. The men have latitude in the choice of a position, and have plenty of space wherein to use the rifle.

3. Latitude in the choice of a position means latitude in the selection of cover; and this, combined with the facts that a change of position may be made with the utmost rapidity, and that 'dressing' is not insisted on, as it must be in close order, renders the extended line the least favourable target for the enemy's fire.

The objections to the proposals of this dreamer of dreams are (1) That time, an important factor in the attack, where the chief endeavour is to pass over the ground and to get within effective range as speedily as possible, would be lost if, after the passage of every obstacle, the taking or leaving cover, the sections were to be accurately dressed. (2) That these sections, with a compact front of forty yards, and a wide interval between each, would invite a concentrated fire. (3) That a shoulder-to-shoulder movement, if it is not allowed to degenerate into loose order, lacks the rapidity of the rush of a number of men who have nothing to think about except reaching the next halting place in the speediest and safest manner they can devise.

Loss of time and loss of life would be the results of such a formation. And sympathise as we may with his endeavours to restore 'the bloody energy of battle,' it is impossible to approve of unnecessary waste of vital power. Such methods are too drastic. The presence of the faint-hearted would scarcely compensate for the sacrifice of stouter hearts; and it is scarcely necessary to revolutionise tactics in order to check an evil with which a few file-closers, aided by a copious vocabulary and the regulation revolver, would be well able to deal. The disorder which accompanied and followed the attack of the Prussian infantry in '70–'71, was not due to the use, but to the abuse, of extended order; and this abuse arose from the want of

preparation; the hurrying through or neglect of the preliminary stages; faulty dispositions at the outset, the impetuosity of all ranks, and the excessive independence of the subordinate leaders.

The truth is that, in many respects, the whole structure of the Prussian tactics of 1870 was fundamentally unsound. This sweeping statement is, of course, open to the objection that the regulations in force before the war made careful provision against the occurrence of the faults that there made themselves so prominent. There are two ways, however, of reading regulations. The one to master them so thoroughly that each has its due prominence in the mind, and therefore its due prominence in action; to become, as it were, instinctively imbued with the spirit of the whole. The other, the more universal, to regard only those which affect everyday procedure, such as drill, manœuvres, and inspections, and which are therefore thrust into undue prominence; relegating the remainder to the second place in peace; and consequently, as in times of excitement men act rather by habit than on reflection, ignoring them in action. That portion of our own Drill-book which refers to attack and defence is merely the essence of tactics. There is no single sentence which is not of primary importance, no single principle laid down that can be violated with impunity, no single instruction that should not be practised over and over again. And yet how often, in the attack of a battalion, are the diagrams, intended merely as a general guide under the least complicated circumstances, the only things that are considered! It is not so much that the spirit is neglected for the letter, but that the constant attention to those rules in the daily work of the drill-ground leads to other rules and principles, less susceptible of methodical procedure, being overlooked. Certain principles are exalted to the exclusion of others. It was thus with the Prussians in 1870. The power of the initiative, the strength of the offensive, the excellent results of the company-column formation, had been dinned into their ears. They went into battle with their minds saturated with these ideas, and fundamental principles were cast to the winds. It is for this reason that the groundwork of an officer's education should be

the tactical regulations; the drill-book, and the drill-book alone. When every word and every principle contained therein has been tattooed into his brain, theoretically and practically, so that it is impossible for him to act otherwise than in accordance with them, then, and not till then, let him be introduced to grand tactics and the operations of war. Let him learn how the individual soldier, the individual section, company, and battalion, is expected to act in every phase of active service, and the knowledge he has thus acquired will render it easy for him to learn the art of independent command. Skill in placing his men in good position for using their rifles, in leading them from cover to cover, in knowing when to close and when to extend during an attack, is of infinitely more value to the regimental officer than a knowledge of how Wellington crossed the Douro or Steinmetz passed the defile of Nachod. Four weeks' company-training is a better education for a company leader than a year's study of Hamley.

However, if it is anything at all, the education of the Prussian officers is pre-eminently practical. It would therefore appear that if they failed when brought face to face with reality, peace practice is of little value in the field. But, as already mentioned, the Prussians derived much benefit in one respect from their peace practice; and if in other respects their methods were vicious, it was because the first principles of war had not become second nature; and that ideas, good in themselves, had been engrafted at the expense of others equally sound and even more important. Space does not permit more than a very general glance at the conduct of the earlier battles of 1870, but it requires no more than a brief survey to prove that fundamental rules were flagrantly broken, and that this was in great degree the cause of that confusion which the author of the 'Summer Night's Dream' proposes to set right by remedies worse than the disease.

In the first place, the necessity of preparing the attack by a heavy artillery fire was habitually neglected, not by the artillery itself—it was always ready and always in position to carry out its duty—but by the subordinate commanders. The leaders of advanced guards never troubled themselves to give the gunners

time to do their work. The action was generally begun before the batteries had deployed. So, at Spicheren, the infantry was moved off to the attack at the same time that the batteries came into action, although the Rotherberg, the point of the enemy's position most dangerous to the advancing troops, was open to a concentric artillery fire, and held only a single battery to oppose it. So, at Woerth, the advanced guard of the 11th Army Corps, before the French guns were silenced, sent four battalions across perfectly open meadows to assault the Niederwald, which, after penetrating the wood for a short distance, were repulsed in the utmost disorder. At an earlier hour, on the same day, the 4th Bavarian Division attempted to move forward on Fröschwiller, employing four battalions for the purpose. After a brief march 'a shell and mitrailleuse fire prevented their further progress.' There was no artillery in support. And even when reinforced by six fresh battalions, the attack, reading between the lines of the official account, appears to have come near disaster. At Colombey the advanced guard of the 7th Corps rushed into action exactly as had done the advanced guards of the 11th Corps and the Bavarians at Woerth. At Gravelotte the famous assault of the Prussian Guard upon St. Privat was not prepared by the artillery. Although 180 guns were in position against the French right, 'the centre of the St. Privat position was still untouched when the 1st Guard Division advanced to the attack.'

Before the French left wing, moreover, although the first rush of the 15th Division on the Bois de Genivaux may in some degree be excused by the determination of the infantry to gain ground for the advance of the artillery, its further attempt, when it cleared the wood, to move against the exceedingly strong line of trenches on the Point du Jour plateau was altogether premature. Here, then, is one important rule, which was in several instances utterly disregarded, and this by officers of the highest rank. Had it been observed, unity would have stood a better chance. It is not one of the least beneficial results of the preliminary artillery fire that it gives time for the infantry to deploy into line of battle; for the commanders to

select and point out objectives, and to assign to each unit an adequate task in the coming struggle; as well as for the leaders of the latter to examine the ground over which they are to move, and to devise measures for doing so in the method most conducive to economy of life and development of fire. If these preliminaries are neglected, either from the premature action of the advanced guards or by the impatience of the commanders, disorder asserts itself from the very outset. And, as we have seen, they were neglected by the Prussians under circumstances which were no excuse whatever for their doing so. This, then, was one reason for the confusion and impossibility of control which the 'Summer Night's Dream' laments.

But, to make matters worse, even when time was available, the dispositions of the Prussian leaders, so far as regards the infantry, were generally faulty, often insufficient, and sometimes left to chance. Now the disposition of infantry for battle must inevitably exercise a very great influence on the progress and issue of the engagement. Where it is in harmony with tactical principles, the result is concentrated energy, concerted action, and such order as is possible in the heat and excitement of the conflict. Where these tactical principles are departed from, we find want of combination, isolated enterprises, lack of strength at the decisive moment, the dispersion and intermingling of tactical units, and the control of the troops taken out of the hands of the superior leaders. In one of the ablest and most practical works on tactics that has ever been written, General Verdy du Vernois, indirectly criticising the Prussian leading of 1870, lays the greatest stress on two points. First, in his comments on an imaginary action near Trautenau, he thus speaks of the action of a brigade, and his remarks apply equally well to the army corps and the division: 'The position of the brigade before the commencement of the action was by wings, which would allow of a well-regulated guidance during the course of it, and permit the regiments being kept separate. When the first line came into action it occupied a front of about 2,000 paces; had this been formed from a single regiment, its commander could not possibly be at every point where his presence was required. . . . Again, when

the reinforcement of the first line became necessary, the second regiment of the brigade would have to be brought up—portions of it pushed into the first line. A mixture of the two regiments must ensue, and their commanders will have to pick out their companies as they may require them. The dispositions of the two commanders will then almost inevitably clash with one another, and the full power of the troops will not be brought out. . . . Of what use is the compact coherence of a regiment if it is to be abandoned at the very moment that the most severe test is before it, just as the real action commences?' 'Lateral extension,' he adds, 'does not admit of the connected conduct of portions of troops belonging to the same body, nor of their being brought into action as required; and the only way to ensure this, is to form them in rear of one another.' It is true that this formation can only be adopted by the larger units—army corps and divisions—when the country affords facilities for movements on a broad front. But in the actions of August and September 1870, these facilities often existed. They were seldom utilised. At Gravelotte, indeed, the orders issued by the Red Prince for the corps of the Second Army to advance in mass of divisions brought the Saxons into contact with the enemy just in time to win the battle; but along the front of the 9th Corps and of the First Army the disorder was great, for each brigade and each division were deployed to their full extent, and the reinforcements that came up were in many cases supplied by troops that belonged to different army corps, and even different armies. At Spicheren the commander of the 14th Division extended his leading brigade over a front of nearly 3,000 paces, whilst he sent the other to strike the enemy's rear. The enemy bearing heavily on his front, reinforcements drawn from other army corps and another army were sent in piecemeal, and hence arose the historic intermingling of thirty-two companies in inextricable confusion on the Rotherberg and in the Giferts Wald. It is useless to multiply instances. 'A connected leading,' says Verdy du Vernois, 'can only be effected by deepening the formations. The troops fighting in the front line must be furnished with immediate supports belonging to the same

tactical units as themselves, for without this precaution a joint action of the whole cannot be produced. . . . Whenever, in the campaign of 1870, this principle was overlooked, a connected conduct of the action was rendered impossible, and the evil consequences resulting from it could be traced in almost every case. I have already quoted Moltke to the effect that the maxim 'Aus der Tiefe zu fechten' was generally neglected.

'Science in a Pickelhaube,' says General Dragomiroff, 'has taken possession of the field of battle; . . . but there is nothing to make a fuss about in all the pretended revelations of the science of war. Modern tactics remain substantially what they were in the days of Napoleon. Napoleonic tactics rest on a firm basis, on principles which can never be affected by changes of armament.' One of the primary principles, often carried to excess by Napoleon and his marshals, was in the depth given to tactical units. This principle the Germans in 1866 and 1870 entirely ignored. Generally speaking, the attack was carried out in two lines. This formation was almost invariably employed, whenever, that is, special dispositions were made preparatory to thrusting a force into action. Now science had arrived at the conclusion that what are practically linear tactics are best adapted to present conditions; with this difference, that the line should be elastic instead of rigid. But, from the earliest days of the new formation, it had never been considered sufficient, save under exceptional circumstances, to leave the first line unsupported by less than two other lines in rear. This was the formation approved by Wellington, than whom we have yet to learn there has lived in modern times a more able tactician. This principle the Prussians departed from. So great was the lateral extension of every unit, that there were seldom troops remaining to form a third line or reserve for either brigade, division, or army corps. And when we read in the history of 1870 of the failure or, at best, the indecisive success of the infantry attacks, we shall find, if we examine the details, that the cause of such failures or indecisive successes was that support was not forthcoming at

the critical moment. The formation had not depth enough to push its way through the storm. Moreover, the duties of the second line were ill defined. In conjunction with the fighting line it was expected to assault the position; but, being under no special command, it gradually drifted into the fighting line as gaps occurred; it seldom, if ever, remained intact at the critical moment, and it certainly never exerted a decisive influence at that moment. In fact, the over-prominence given to the old rule that all strong positions should be turned and not assaulted in front, brought about a constant tendency to increase the front, and the second line was, consequently, generally employed to fill the gaps left in the first line by the divergence of the skirmishers to right and left. In the older tactics, if a position was to be turned, special troops were detailed for the purpose, taken from the reserves; the duty of the first line being to occupy the enemy in front whilst this was being done. Had this principle been adhered to by the Prussians, the first line would have remained a compact body, strongly supported by the second, and the danger of their lines, extended over a wide front, which, as Captain May pointed out, resulted in the disasters of Trautenau and Langensalza, would have been avoided. Perhaps the repulse of the right wing at Spicheren is the best instance in the War of 1870 of the evils resulting from over-extension, and the neglect to keep in hand a strong reserve. Shortly after five o'clock the attack on Stiring Wendel came to a standstill. Twenty-nine and a half companies (7,250 rifles at full strength), generally speaking, in a single line, invested the north-west side of the village on a front of nearly 3,000 paces; that is, allowing one-fifth for losses—and their losses had been heavy—there was not more than one rifle available per yard. A great portion of the troops were exhausted by severe fighting and long marches under an August sun; and when, below the opposite slopes of the Spicheren wood, a French column was seen in motion, the whole line, with the exception of a small force that clung obstinately to the Stiring copse, gave way in confusion.

A second error which intensified disorder, and which applies to the individual battalions, even more to the brigades, was the

undue extension of the front. More often than not, battalions, whilst as yet exposed only to unaimed fire, or even when not under fire at all, deployed into line of company columns at intervals of eighty paces, and advanced covered by the four skirmishing Züge. This exaggerated application of the principle of the development of fire brought many evils in its train. The Prussian officers, as previously stated, had given ear to the theories of Captain May in his 'Tactical Retrospect of 1866.' They saw in the new doctrines which advocated the almost complete independence of the company leaders boundless opportunities for personal distinction. When the battalion deployed, each captain found himself with his compact unit of 250 rifles. Orders, very probably, could no longer reach him. At all events, the voice of the commander was soon drowned in the rattle of the breech-loader. The company had become free from all control and interference. It was in the hands of its own leader to do with as he pleased. Not the slightest tie bound it to its own battalion. If it were in the direst straits the battalion could not stretch a hand to help it. The commander could not send a single rifle to swell its ranks, for he had retained no second line under his own hand. When the battalion went into action without a reserve, every link that bound it together as a unit snapped; and the line of battle became formed of a number of small bodies, each fighting for itself, and wandering to and fro across the battlefield as the judgment or ambition of its immediate leader might dictate. Nor were single Züge always to be restrained. Unreasonable initiative often carried them far away from their companies. It is little to be wondered at, then, if the individual soldiers when they saw their superiors part so lightly with the bonds they had been taught to deem inviolable in peace, were only too ready to free themselves from supervision and restraint.

Another cause of confusion was the habit the troops acquired of swerving to one flank or the other in order to seek cover, and thus abandoning the line of direction. This was not confined to individuals; but whole companies, or the greater part of whole companies, acted in this respect with wonderful unanimity. When we study the battles of 1870

with maps and books, we are often at a loss to account for the devious wanderings of various companies. If we study the battles on the ground itself, the cause is soon revealed. Tiny depressions, commodious ditches, convenient banks, although often at right angles to the true direction, clearly mark the reason and the course of these meanderings.

Cover exercised a magnetic influence, to which the unity of the battalion, disregarded as it was both in theory and in practice, opposed no counter-attraction.

Well has it been said that 'the company leader who, regardless of losses, carries out the task assigned to him, is a better servant than the company leader who manœuvres.'

Lastly, General Verdy du Vernois may be summoned as evidence to prove that dispersion being accepted as an inevitable and at the same time a minor evil, the Prussian officers neglected opportunities for restoring tactical unity. 'The experience,' he says, 'of many of our late battles shows us practically that, after successfully overcoming any difficult phase, the last thing thought of is to restore the formations of the shattered troops, and to re-form the masses ready for further employment. This point should not only be attended to at critical moments, but should also be kept constantly in view during the course of an engagement itself.' Again—and be it remembered that the whole of his book is an indirect criticism of the war of 1870—care must always be taken to re-form as far as possible behind such cover as may be met. When the nature of this will admit of it, the companies should be drawn closer to one another again, or half-battalions or even battalions re-formed.

Such is the account of the German shortcomings in 1866 and 1870. That their own critics have not been backward in exposing these shortcomings is true. May, the great innovator, Verdy du Vernois, and the author of 'The Prussian Infantry in 1869,' of 'The Frontal Attack of Infantry,' of 'The Tactics of the Future,' and of 'The Summer Night's Dream,' to mention but a few, have all of them held a brief against their own comrades. To expose these shortcomings is to repeat a twice-told tale. And, moreover, suddenly confronted by the havoc

wrought by the fire of the chassepot, a fire which did not come within the bounds of their experience, it is little wonder that they failed to devise, then and there, on the field of battle, the tactics best suited to this unexpected emergency. But with this we have no concern. The point to bring home is this: that the confusion of the Prussian battles was, in a large degree due to their neglect of the immutable principles of tactics, and that, therefore, in regard to tactics, they are a bad model for us to follow. The sagacity of our own people is a surer guide, and if, after 1870, we wanted a model, the tactics of the last great war waged by English-speaking soldiers would have served us better. At the same time, it is important to recognise that confusion, even to a very great extent, will be sometimes unavoidable. It will be absolutely necessary, in order to prepare the way for the bayonet, that battalion must be piled on battalion. At all costs, the firing line must be kept at sufficient strength, and to this intermixture of units the Germans are wise in constantly practising their troops.

It has been claimed by an American general that the Americans taught the Prussians the use of extended order. This claim I can scarcely admit. The devastating effects of modern fire forced extended order on the troops in both cases. The Prussians learnt nothing from either Federal or Confederate unfortunately for themselves, for they might have learnt a great deal. Had the battles of the Secession War been studied in Berlin instead of being dismissed with a contemptuous allusion to mobs of skirmishers, the faults enumerated above would have been foreseen; and a knowledge of the modifications of the old formations necessary to achieve decisive results would have been gained without the lavish expenditure of life which the defective tactics of 1870 entailed. Skobeleff, the first of European generals to master the problem of the offensive, knew the American War 'by heart,' and in his successful assault on the Turkish redoubts on the otherwise disastrous September 10 'he followed the plan of the American generals on both sides when attempting to carry such positions: to follow up the assaulting column with fresh troops without waiting for the first column to be repulsed.'

The American tactics, although so far as drill went the French rapidity of evolution and manœuvre was adopted, were very English in their methods. That we taught their fingers to fight we have not the slightest wish to assert. But a strong similarity exists between the tactics of the Civil War and those taught in the English 'Field Exercises,' from 1870 downwards. It is possible, on the contrary, that the lessons of the war had not been altogether lost in England, and that they exerted an influence of which English soldiers were scarcely conscious. In the first place, the unity of the battalion was scrupulously respected; and although the leaders of the units in the fighting line were allowed a free hand as soon as superior control became impossible, they were neither encouraged to manœuvre nor permitted to deviate from the line of direction the commander had assigned. Secondly, the traditional formation in three lines was the basis of all dispositions for battle. Thirdly, the second and third lines of each division were, as a rule, supplied by its own brigades, and not by strange units; that is, the division went into battle on a narrow front and with great depth. Fourthly, the preliminary dispositions were carefully carried out: and lastly, as both common sense and experience taught the leaders that to carry a position, line after line, regardless of cohesion, must be piled one on top of the other, the process of rallying, not only when the enemy had been driven back, but at every pause in the attack, was a universal rule in battle, and constantly practised in the camp.

'The American troops,' says an officer who commanded a famous volunteer regiment, 'found their places surprisingly quick after a charge. Many regiments were constantly drilled in rushing and assembling after being checked in confusion.

'Battalions,' writes another officer of higher rank, 'had to deploy when the fire became heavy, and became more or less scattered and disorganised in the advance. There was confusion after a successful attack, but our men rallied readily; generally the colours were planted in convenient places, and the men fell in on them rapidly.'

Again: 'There was always more or less confusion, but only

momentarily, in a successful charge. . . . in such cases re-forming was but the matter of a few minutes.'

Now this consensus of opinion as to the rapid re-formation of the American tactical units indicates that the methods of the attack and the disposition of the battalions were based on sound principles. The high intelligence of the men and the practice of the drill-ground doubtless had a share in so satisfactorily overcoming confusion, but sound principles played the chief part. It may also be remarked that the Americans adhered to the essentially English organisation of the battalion into a number of small companies, which was so strongly upheld by the almost unanimous voice of the British army when the tacticians who chose the Prussians as their model attempted to overthrow it in favour of four large companies. American experience quickly detected the faults of the Prussian system, and the opinion of General Upton, the officer selected after the war to re-write the drill-book of the United States infantry, is well worth notice.[1]

I have already spoken of Skobeleff's successful employment of American tactics in the third battle of Plevna, and if we study the accounts of his operations against the Turkish lines, it will become apparent that there was a fundamental difference between his ideas of battle and those which prevailed amongst the Prussians in 1870. True to the traditions of Suvaroff, and to the teachings of American soldiers, Skobeleff's end and purpose were to bring the bayonet into play ; to prepare the way by fire, but to hand over to the bayonet the decision. The Germans, on the other hand, relied on fire, and on fire alone, to beat down the enemy's resistance ; the final charge was a secondary consideration altogether. The result of this was the great development of the front of battle, the constant pressure towards the flanks, in order to seek out positions from which to bring an oblique or flanking fire to bear, and thus to develop the power of the firearm to the greatest possible extent. To surround the enemy in a circle of fire, as exemplified by Sedan, was the chief aim of German officers of every rank. Generally

[1] *The Prussian Company Column.* Pamphlet. Published 1875. R.U.S.I Library.

speaking, no endeavour was made to hurry on the decision by more resolute methods. Now, the Americans had come to a very different conclusion: they had not to do with an army like the Austrians, who could not reply to their fire, nor to one like the French, who habitually neglected their flanks, and from whose partial counter-strokes they had nothing to fear.[1] The experience of Cold Harbor and Chancellorsville taught the Federal and Confederate not only how to secure their flanks, but also the necessity of powerful counter-strokes. The generals on both sides, unless their numbers—as were Sherman's, in his Atlanta campaign—were far the greater, found that enveloping tactics were seldom possible and always dangerous; and that to prevent the battle degenerating into a protracted struggle between two strongly entrenched armies, and to attain a speedy and decisive result, mere development of fire was insufficient. The fighting qualities of the men must also be taken into account. It may fairly be questioned whether any amount of fire would have driven back the troops which garrisoned the opposing entrenchments of Lee and Grant at Petersburg in the last nine months of the war. From a very early period the tenacity which there displayed itself in such heroic fashion had been remarkable. 'Time and again,' says one of the officers above quoted, 'according to all precedent, one side or the other ought to have been whipped, but it declined to be anything of the sort, and obstinately refused to give up. The losses show this. They are often out of all proportion to results, as results would have been shown on the continent of Europe. We in America agree with Colonel Chesney, who thinks that this was due, in no small measure, to the quality which the troops on both sides inherited from the stock that furnished his infantry to the Duke of Wellington.' Nothing is more noticeable in the history of the Civil War than the manner in which the American troops refused to recognise that their position was turned. The ordinary rules of war were over and over again set at defiance. 'Never to know when they were beaten,' was a characteristic of both North and South. But the troops

[1] Nor, it might be added, an enemy like the Boers, who never attempted a counter-stroke and were particularly nervous about their flanks.—Ed.

possessing this quality can only be defeated by sheer weight of numbers, by superior physical force; and it was for this reason that the dominant idea of American tactics was to come to push of bayonet. The fire of the skirmishers was employed merely to cover the advance of the assaulting line, not as in Germany to open a path into the enemy's position. The American troops, therefore, were drawn up for battle in the deep formations usual in shock-tactics; that is, in three lines closely supporting one another.

Now the question is, which was right? The extreme extension of front, its consequent medley of units and difficulty of control, or the determined charge of successive lines of battle, with its great expenditure of life compressed into a short time and a small space, and culminating in a vigorous assault. The decision is no easy one; but for those who have faith in the traditionary tactical capacity of English soldiers, there is no need to go far to find a judge. This capacity has found expression in our drill-books, and in the pages devoted to the attack will be found the true solution of the problem. It may be noticed in the first place that in those pages but little stress is laid on flanking fire or flanking movements. And for this reason, that the drill-book does not profess to instruct those who have the supreme control over offensive operations, but those who have to carry out the details. This omission makes clear, therefore, that flank attacks and the development of flanking fire (on a large scale) are held to be the province of the superior authorities: they are not within the province of those officers whose commands merely form units of the whole force. On the contrary, instead of encouraging excessive exercise of initiative, the paramount importance of order, of the cohesion of the attacking body, and of maintaining the true direction is inculcated on every page.

'Extended order is the rule, close order the exception': 'great clouds of skirmishers and small tactical units, that is the form for infantry.'

These were the cries that were heard on all sides after 1870, in England as well as on the Continent. But in England there were men who saw the dangers and the exaggeration of the new

theories, who held that close order was now, as heretofore, the backbone of the attack, extended order no more than an essential accessory. Nor did they—and here the army was always with them—accept the necessity of breaking up the battalion, and of sacrificing unity to the initiative of the subordinate leaders. To their views opinion has veered round. The true mean has been struck. Close and extended order combined are officially taught as the form for infantry; close order whenever it is possible, extended order only when it is unavoidable.

Secondly, the instructions of the drill-book are principally concerned with the execution of a frontal attack. There is no disposition manifested to shirk the difficulties of such an operation, but neither is there timid insistence on those difficulties. That flank attacks are, for the troops engaged therein, to all intents and purposes, frontal attacks; that flank attacks must be assisted by attacks on the front of the position, and that frontal attacks will often be the only way to victory, are tactical truths which have been fairly faced. Moreover, and this point is most deserving of attention, the success of the frontal attack is considered well within bounds of possibility, and the delivery of the final assault of no less importance than the preparation by fire. It is here that the system of attack differs so radically from the practice of 1866 and 1870, and approaches so close to the practice of the Secession War.[1]

It is scarcely necessary to mention that this system was scouted after 1870 by the Prussians and their admirers; and, it may be remarked, that although the latest regulations appear to indicate that the Kriegs Ministerium contemplates a return to older methods, the question has not been approached with confidence. Even the author of the 'Summer Night's Dream,' reformer as he is, makes no further use of his closed Züge than to bring the units intact into the firing line. The firing line, in Germany, is still the fighting line.

[1] The assurance with which frontal attacks were pronounced impossible by English military critics after the South African war, and the complete refutation of those critics by the successes of the Japanese, are well worthy of note. There could be no better evidence of the truth contained in the opening sentences of this chapter.—Ed.

To those who are willing to accept the drill-book as an infallible guide it will be perhaps more satisfactory if we test its teaching by the light of history. At the outset we must bear in mind that it is written for a voluntary army and not for a host of conscripts. Despite the overthrow of the professional army of France by the national levies of their great antagonist, the old adage that expresses tersely the relative efficiency of volunteers and 'pressed men' still holds good, and in comparing English and American tactics with those of other states, should never be lost sight of. It would be rash, however, to assert that had the Prussian Guards, in the disastrous attack on August 18, been replaced by men who had taken arms of their own free will, St. Privat La Montagne would have fallen without the aid of the flank attack of the Saxons. The courage of the men who advanced up the long glacis under that terrible rain of bullets is beyond suspicion. Where they failed none could have succeeded. But at the same time it is fairly open to question whether, had other tactics been employed, St. Privat, instead of being quoted as an instance of the futility of frontal attacks, would not be now held out as a convincing proof, not only of the possibility but of the decisive results of a vigorous frontal attack on the key of the enemy's position. In the official report of General von Kessler, commanding the brigade of the 2nd Division, we find the details of the combat, so far as regards the battalions engaged, and the impression made at the time on the mind of an experienced soldier.

It has already been mentioned that the attack had not been prepared by artillery. The French guns had been reduced to silence, but they had suffered no great loss in men or material, and from fifty to seventy were still available for further action. St. Privat itself, the strong stone village which crowns the slope, 2,000 yards in length, which lay between the opposing lines, was as yet untouched. Nor does it appear that the French infantry had been shaken by the duel between the two artilleries. A thick line of skirmishers occupied the very meagre cover 600 yards in front of the position. Heavy reserves were hidden in security in the long hollow which stretches from St. Privat to Amanvillers, and a force of nearly 20,000 rifles was ready to

overwhelm the attack with the long-ranging fire of the chassepot.

The formation of the Guards was in two lines only, the first extended, with supports in company column, the second in column of half-battalions. As they left their shelter by St. Marie-aux-Chênes, they were met, at a range of over 1,500 yards, by a storm of bullets. Men and officers fell fast; the supports pushed into the fighting line, the whole moving forward by rushes, and lying down wherever some slight undulation offered cover.

The second line followed at short intervals, but its serried masses afforded a tempting target, and the French appeared to watch the moment that they rose to their feet, for von Kessler tells us that such moments were the signal for outbursts of heavier fire.

Greatly exaggerated as is the estimate of the Duke of Würtemburg, that in ten minutes 6,000 fell, the losses were enormous, especially in officers. But still the Guard pressed on; the outlying French skirmishers were driven back, and it was not until the long lines of wall which surrounded St. Privat and the Jerusalem Farm were approached within a distance of 400 to 600 paces that the attack came to a stand. The second line had become merged into the first. The commanders recognised that in the absence of support it was useless to press forward, and their further efforts were now limited to holding the ground won at so great a sacrifice. This was done successfully. A counter-stroke against their right flank was beaten back by the fire of the two batteries in close support to the right rear, and the French made no attempt to sweep down in mass upon the thinned and exhausted line. Eventually, when the turning movement of the Saxon Corps was fully developed, the remnant of the brigades did good service in the converging attack before which St. Privat fell.

General von Kessler's report is too long to quote, but it contains passages which are full of interest. One of these refers to the moral effect of a daring advance. As the brigades approached St. Privat, he relates that the stubbornness of the defence began to relax, that the French seemed to lose heart

and confidence at the sight of a large mass of men pressing resolutely forward, despite the terrible fire to which they were subjected. A conviction that the chassepot was powerless to check the advance appeared to spread amongst them, and more than once he states his impression that had fresh troops been available, they could have been brought up in close order under cover of the fire of the fighting line, and that the position might have then and there been rushed.

A careful examination, therefore, of this attack shows, in the first place, that every single condition was unfavourable, and that, nevertheless, an experienced officer, who had his fingers on the pulse of the action throughout, believed that with further support success was not impossible. The unavoidable disadvantages against which the Prussians laboured were almost overwhelming. The position was phenomenally strong. The ground was absolutely open, and both its hard surface and the gentle slope gave the greatest possible effect to ricochet fire. And yet the French first line was driven in, and a sensible effect produced on the tenacity of the defence. But natural disadvantages were not the only obstacles. The preliminary dispositions were insufficient, and the formations faulty. The attack was altogether unprepared either by artillery or by infantry, for the needle-gun was not effective over 600 yards. The brigades, however, occupied a front too extensive for their strength—12,000 rifles (not 20,000, as the Duke of Würtemburg states) to 2,500 paces—little more than four rifles to the pace. There were not troops sufficient to form a third line, and be it remembered that even if the third line is not designed to bear an active part in the attack, the moral support of its presence is of the greatest value. The absence of a third line was of course due to the fact that the Saxon Corps was employed in the turning movement which ultimately forced the position. With this we have nothing to do; we are considering the operation as a frontal attack pure and simple. A heavy bombardment of the village, and the possession of a firearm able to reply at once to the enemy's fire, and a strong force in support, would, in all probability, have brought about success. The total losses would have been excessive, but the result would

have been decisive; the battle would have been won whilst daylight still remained in which to improve the victory, and the general total of casualties would not have been increased.

Equally gallant, at first even more successful, but in the end no less disastrous, was Osman's desperate attempt to break the investing lines at Plevna. A force of thirty-three battalions numbering, perhaps, 15,000 rifles, and organised into a single division of four brigades, crossed the River Vid on the night of December 10, and as the winter morning broke, was arrayed in two lines, covered by a swarm of skirmishers, behind an undulation 3,500 yards from the first of the triple lines of the enemy's entrenchments. After a very short and ineffectual artillery fire, they advanced up an open slope, exposed to the fire of more than fifty heavy field guns and of 3,000 infantry, sheltered behind their parapets. At 1,500 yards from the position the attack faltered. Osman, riding in the midst of his battalions, reinforced the skirmishers, and the lines swept on. In three-quarters of an hour they had approached within striking distance, notwithstanding the heavy fire that met them full in face and exploded the caissons of the few batteries that accompanied them. Two battalions were completely destroyed, but there was no further check. The first line of trenches was carried, and the redoubts were stormed; so swift was the work that the Russian gunners had not even time to bring up their teams, and eleven field-pieces were left in the hands of the Turkish infantry. One thousand paces beyond was the second line of works. Whilst the majority of the force secured itself in the position already won, six battalions advanced over the open ground and stormed a lunette and trenches in the second line. Russian reinforcements were now coming up on all sides, but the position was pierced, and another resolute effort would have carried at least a portion of the troops beyond the circle of investment. But that effort was not to be. The second division of the army of Plevna, on which Osman relied to improve the advantages he had gained, found the bridges choked by a dense crowd of fugitives from the town with their household goods piled high on carts and waggons. Only a few battalions were able to make the passage,

and it was then too late. The enemy was pressing on in front and flank; the trenches ran so deep in blood, the redoubts were so full of dead and wounded men, that even the Turkish soldiery could scarcely abide the horrors of them. Still, whilst they saw the man they had obeyed so well during four months of battle and famine riding calmly along the line they never flinched; but when the great Pacha, severely wounded, was borne away from their midst, then they gave back, and retired slowly to the river.

Such is the history of two great failures. And it may well be asked if they can be considered as anything else than decisive proofs of the impossibility of the frontal attack, if the English system, tested by the experiences of St. Privat and of Plevna, should not be pronounced faulty and impracticable. But of these two operations the latter at least gained a measure of success. This success was due to the fact that the force was marshalled in several distinct lines; that at the moment of the final rush strong supports were at hand, in good order, and obedient to control. The ultimate failure was due to the fact that it was impossible to follow the principles advocated by the English Drill-book: the preparation was insufficient, the numbers employed were insufficient, and the artillery did not co-operate. Nothing could be done to secure the flanks of the attack or to distract the attention of the troops on either side of the point assaulted. These are principles as important as those which were held in mind. It was to their neglect that the triumph of the Turks was short-lived, and it is for this reason that it has been cited. Frontal attacks, then, have won partial success. Their ultimate failure was due to the violation of practical principles, and is therefore no proof that frontal attacks are impossible. On the contrary, there is ground for the belief that Napoleon's decisive stroke of piercing the centre of the enemy's line may be successfully applied on modern battle-fields. Nor are those above quoted the only instances of frontal attacks in recent campaigns. If we cannot point to attacks *en masse*, successfully conducted in the first phase of the war of 1870, when the mettle of the enemy was that of a disciplined army, there were battles both in Armenia and Bulgaria which

supply examples. And despite the general opinion of American leaders, that veteran troops behind well-constructed earthworks could hold their own against five times their number; still, over and over again in the Secession War, the strongest entrenchments fell before the determined rush of closely succeeding lines. Wherever the principle was applied of concentrating a powerful force against a single point, of meeting the enemy in superior force at the decisive point, the defence failed, and the presence of intact bodies of troops, answering readily to the demands of their leader, gave the means of securing a decisive victory. I may instance Sheridan's and Wood's attack at Chattanooga, and Longstreet's at Chickamauga. The massing of 30,000 Federals against the 'Bloody Angle' at Spottsylvania, had it not been for the precipitation of the second line, would have probably been more than partially successful, whilst Meade's charge at Fredericksburg, and Pickett's at Gettysburg, owed their repulse to the same cause as did Osman Pacha's at Plevna, the want of a strong third line.

In 1870, when the long line of skirmishers induced the enemy to yield his position before their developing fire, and the battle paused, the enemy had time to rally, to man his second line, to bring up his artillery and his reserves. Except at Woerth and Gravelotte, where the victors were in overwhelming numbers, success was never decisive. But a battle divides itself into phases. The defender, if he has any choice in the selection of the field, will take care to have a strong second position to fall back upon. To break his first line so suddenly as to disconcert all his plans, to have a compact force at hand ready to follow up without giving him a moment's breathing space—this is the task of the attack; to drive a wedge into the heart of his disordered masses, forcing his wings asunder, instead of merely pushing his whole line back, and the tactics laid down in our own regulations, are the means whereby the task may best be executed. Neither smokeless powder nor the magazine rifle will necessitate any radical change. If the defence has gained, as has been asserted, by these inventions, the plunging fire of rifled howitzers will add a more than proportional strength to the attack. And if the magazine rifle

has introduced a new and formidable element into battle, the moral element still remains the same. Weapons improve, but human nature remains the same. Under a plunging fire from which no bomb-proofs, constructed in the field, can give sufficient shelter, and continued to the very moment of the assault; under the bombardment of an artillery which is not content, as was the artillery at Gravelotte and at Plevna, with silencing the enemy's guns, but sweeps the parapets with shrapnel, and aims at producing more than a mere moral effect, will men's nerves be sufficiently steady to enable them to reserve the magazine for the supreme moment? And even if their discipline and endurance enable them to do this, will not the saying hold good, that the value of fire diminishes with its intensity?

It is true that 'the working value of any system of tactics cannot be ascertained, except experimentally.' But it is possible to test the system by history; and history, not of one war only, but of those waged by the great captains of modern times, bears evidence that the principles on which our present system of infantry tactics, and of infantry organisation, are based, are sound in every particular. We have no need, then, to go further than our own regulations to learn the method in which troops are to be handled in attack or defence. It is probable, when these regulations come face to face with the realities of war, that modifications in some respects will be found necessary; but, so far as lies within the wit of man, they have blended the best lessons of the past with shrewd forecast of the future, and if modifications have to be made, they will in no way interfere with the general structure of the offensive battle.

There are rules of which some are old as the art of war itself, others produced by the discovery of gunpowder, and by every improvement in firearms; and to break these rules is to court disaster. It is, therefore, of extreme importance that those whose duty is to lead men in action should have these rules engrained into their very instinct. To act in accordance with them should have become habitual. It is for this reason that the normal formations for the attack are valuable and even necessary. If these formations are adopted at the outset of an engagement

the preliminary dispositions, which have been shown to be essential, will always have been made. And if the formations are unsuitable to ground or circumstances, they are exceedingly elastic—susceptible of ready modification. In every case, the foundation for sound offensive tactics will have been firmly laid. It is wiser to establish a habit than to expect in every case unerring initiative. Be it remembered, that the German system of ensuring able leaders is very different from our own. The officers of the Imperial Army are under constant supervision. Their tactical capabilities undergo incessant tests. So ruthless is the system of rejection, that a few mistakes in field manœuvres lead to speedy retirement. The application of the system is short and sharp. The supreme authorities are not called upon to decide, nor do they admit appeal. The hint of a brigadier that an application for sick-leave will be favourably considered is enough, or an explanation of the mistakes committed in presence of the whole of the officers of a battalion. So precarious is the tenure of command, that one often hears the remark that So-and-so goes to bed with his Pickelhaube on one side and a silk hat on the other, for he does not know whether, when he wakes up, he will find himself soldier or civilian.

With such summary retribution staring them in the face, German officers might be safely left to work out their own salvation in the way of formations. It is otherwise with ourselves. English soldiers are brought up with the idea that obedience is of more importance than initiative; they are accustomed neither to the independence which wrought such disorders in 1870, nor to the despotic methods which cut short so many a career. We have no reason to fear, looking at past history, that initiative will not be forthcoming when it is required; but trained as our officers usually are to look for regulations at every point, it seems unwise to trust them entirely to their own resources in the most important work they have to undertake. It is not only in this respect that such an instruction is dangerous. The normal practices make the habit of acting on sound principles instructive; and if an officer is left to his own ideas, without other guide than such general regulations as appear in the German 'Field Exercises,' it is very

probable that he may overlook or disregard some principle of vital importance. Under constant and close supervision this would be impossible. But English battalions are seldom under constant supervision. They are not always under the eye of officers as well trained as those who compose the German General Staff, and bad habits would not always find an immediate corrector.

With the vexed question of initiative *versus* subordination we have now nothing to do; but I may express the conviction that the actions and the tactics of 1866 and 1870 are, in this respect, exceedingly dangerous models, especially as regards the conduct of infantry on the offensive. Order and concentration are of no less value than energy, and an adherence to the normal formations provides for both. Moreover, if the decisive attack is to retain the form which has always proved successful, *i.e.* the rush of successive lines after due preparation by fire on some selected portion of the enemy's position, it is difficult to conceive circumstances in which these formations would not be strictly applicable. The distances between the various supporting bodies will naturally depend on the ground, and also on the manner in which the successive lines are brought up; in this last process, and in the judicious employment of fire, initiative will find scope; but the division into three lines, the distribution of strength, and the duties assigned to the three lines, as laid down in the normal formation, must never be departed from. And with an army whose daily practice it is to carry out these formations, it will be seldom that these important principles, the foundation of success, will be disregarded. Lastly, if, as I am firmly convinced, the attack of a large force upon a single point, whether as stroke or counter-stroke, is still the crowning act of battle, it is an operation which should be familiar to every officer and man. It is necessary that divisions, and even larger forces, should be exercised as the single unit to which this duty is assigned, for it is full of difficulties. Many are the obstacles which may be expected to interfere with the progress of the attack. Advanced posts to be carried, counter-strokes to be repelled, cavalry to be driven back, and incidents of like nature are well calculated to destroy symmetry and create confusion.

Nor will it be an infrequent occurrence that the firing line will have exhausted all its supports and reserves without shaking the enemy or approaching within effective rifle range. Then, if the attack is to be driven home at all costs, it will be necessary to strengthen the skirmishers from the second line, thus piling battalion upon battalion, and to bring up troops from the third line to fill the gaps in the second. To this mixture of units men and officers must be trained; and such training will not be harmful if the paramount importance of order and cohesion is understood by all.

It is, perhaps, a consequence of our little wars, and of our small, isolated garrisons, that there is a tendency amongst regimental officers to look upon the attack formation as a procedure which principally concerns the battalion. But against a civilised enemy, and on more extended battlefields than those to which we are accustomed, the individual battalion would play but an insignificant part. It would form but one amongst many units, for a decisive attack would be seldom committed to any force less than a division, and it is even probable that a whole army corps, with two divisions in front line and one in reserve, would be called upon to undertake the operation. In any movement made in such strength as this, order and precision are the most important considerations. To each division would be allotted a certain front, and unless that front were accurately maintained, crowding, confusion, and deviation of parts of the line from the true direction would be the inevitable result. Now, if every battalion engaged in the firing line were to adopt a different formation, and, if the commanders were left to their own initiative, such might well be the case, it would be difficult in the extreme to preserve the necessary intervals between the component parts of the attacking force. For an operation of this kind a normal formation is absolutely necessary.

It may be argued that the Germans, who are far more likely to have to employ great masses in the attack than ourselves, have, in their latest Field Exercise, discarded all definite prescriptions. This is true enough, so far as the Field Exercise goes. Here it is constantly held in view that to

trammel the independence of the leaders of the firing line is to forego victory, and therefore general principles only are inculcated. But, so far as the daily work of the German officers and soldiers is concerned, it will be found that in every army corps certain rules are laid down which must be followed by the battalion when attacking in combination with other troops; and if these are not quite so precise as those given in our Drill-book, they are supplemented by more detailed regulations in every single infantry regiment. What the Germans are careful to do is to recognise that once the zone of aimed infantry fire is reached, the control of the firing line must perforce be resigned to the section leaders, and that even the captain can only exercise a very general supervision over his company, whilst battalion commanders are expressly forbidden to interfere, during the passage of this zone, with the action of their subordinates. There is no disposition to restrict the responsibility of the subaltern officers, and the maxims laid down in the Field Exercises, as well as the training of the battalions, have for their object the fitting of the junior officers for their important duties.

The success of an attack depends, in the first place, on its strength, its power of gaining fire superiority, of taking instant advantage of success, and of progressing rapidly from one success to another. To effect all this, to restore the order and cohesion to the attack which it lost in 1866 and 1870, to substitute for rashness, impatience, and individual fighting, the strength and momentum of concentrated numbers bound together by a discipline which permits no swerving from the line of direction: to do this and thereby revive that 'bloody energy of battle' which seeks not the exhaustion but the annihilation of the enemy, our own system, even as it now stands, is far better adapted than the disintegrating methods of the Germans or the fantastic visions of the 'Summer Night's Dream.'

CHAPTER VII

LESSONS FROM THE PAST FOR THE PRESENT

ALTHOUGH every soldier who takes his profession seriously admits that there is much to be learned from the experience of others, especially when these others were far greater men than he is himself, the extent and nature of the knowledge to be acquired from a study of military history are not always recognised.

In the first place, this study is far too restricted. It is true that ever since war became a science, since battles ceased to be mere gladiatorial combats, and since campaigns have been won rather by the intellect of the commander than the skill at arms of the men, military history has been considered as a valuable means of war training. But even now this means of training has by no means reached its full development, for it has stopped short at the very point at which it was beginning to be really useful.

It will probably be said that to England, at all events, this assertion can scarcely be applied, that there, at least, the theoretical education of the soldier has reached its limit. Appearances are certainly in favour of this view. Our text-books are all based upon the experiences of the past, and when we recall the frequent illustrations, furnished by innumerable campaigns, which add such weight to the deductions drawn by Home and Clery, we cannot but admit that the essence of military history, so far as regards Minor Tactics, has been by them most ably extracted. Sir Edward Hamley, again, did the same for Strategy; and it is unnecessary to expatiate on the ability with which he dissected the manœuvres of the

acknowledged masters of the art of war. Nor is this all. The very list of lectures delivered at the Royal United Service Institution, as well as in kindred places, is sufficient in itself to prove that the study of military history has attracted for many years the very greatest interest; whilst in our official publications—the infantry, cavalry, and artillery drill-books—those sections which are devoted to tactics are inspired throughout by the actual experiences of the battlefield. There is no want, moreover, in the English language, of books of another kind to teach us, so far as books can, what war is really like. I do not refer to our regimental histories, for war pictures are too often absent from their pages, but to that long catalogue of memoirs, narratives, and biographies, embracing every climate under heaven, and introducing enemies of every nationality, from the Old Guard of Napoleon to the tribes who hold that far-off country 'where three empires meet.'

Still, with all this mass of literature at our command, and notwithstanding the interest evinced in the study of military history, I believe that, even with ourselves, this method of fitting men for war is still in process of evolution, and I hope to indicate the direction which I think the next steps in this process of evolution ought to take.

Let us first of all ask what the lessons are which are taught by Hamley, Home, and Clery, and whether their teaching is not confined within too narrow limits? Do their books, in fact, draw all those lessons from military history which Napoleon referred to when he wrote 'read and re-read the campaigns of the great captains; this is the only way of rightly learning the art of war'? I do not wish to be misunderstood. I have not the very slightest intention of decrying works to which every educated soldier owes so much. If they are limited in their scope it is because their scope was limited of set purpose; because they are only intended for a certain class of student, and for the inculcation of a certain amount of knowledge. Not one of them aspires to comprehend the whole art of war. They make no claim to be more than introductions to a more extended course of study, no more than elementary treatises on strategy and tactics.

Let us take Home and Clery, as the best known of our tactical manuals. What do they teach? The very title of Clery's book answers the question, so far as this one work is concerned. It teaches Minor Tactics, and the preface to the first edition declares the limits of its lessons. 'The following pages formed originally a course of lectures delivered to sub-lieutenants studying at Sandhurst.' That is, the book was written for the instruction of officers of the most junior rank, and a reference to the table of contents, comprehensive as that table is, shows that the scope of the book goes no further than the title. It deals with Minor Tactics only; with the elementary knowledge without which it would be difficult to handle troops efficiently either on manœuvres or on service. Similarly with Home's Précis, although it appeals to a higher grade of officers than the Sandhurst text-book, it is little, if at all, wider in scope. 'It has been prepared,' says the original preface, 'chiefly to aid officers in the examinations for promotion,' and to give the several branches of the Service 'knowledge of each other's capabilities.'

Nor is the last issue, so admirably edited by Colonel Pratt, a whit more ambitious. 'A work of this kind,' he says, 'has no pretension to be exhaustive.'

As a matter of fact, however, the study of Home and Clery, as those authors well understood and took care to explain, is no more than the first step in a most important section of the art of war. That this is not always recognised is due to the fact that the division of tactical science into two parts—Minor Tactics and Grand Tactics—is very generally overlooked. The very phrase 'Grand Tactics' looks strange in its English guise, and I cannot help thinking that Colonel Home, when he called his book a Précis of Tactics, instead of a Précis of Minor Tactics, did something towards confusing the minds of his brother officers. This, however, is not a question of importance. But it is of importance that it should be clearly understood that the science of tactics is divided into two parts, and, also, that the difference between Minor and Grand Tactics should be clearly defined. This last is difficult, for in many respects the two branches of tactics overlap; and I must regret that as I can

nowhere find, although I have no doubt it exists, an exact definition, I have to ask my readers to accept one of my own, which I cannot help suspecting will do very little towards establishing the distinction which undoubtedly exists. However, as definitions—even feeble ones—are necessary when it is desirable that any two parties should consider a subject from the same point of view, I may say at once that Minor Tactics include the formation and disposition of the three arms for attack and defence, and concern officers of every rauk ; whilst Grand Tactics, the art of generalship, include those stratagems, manœuvres, and devices by which victories are won, and concern only those officers who may find themselves in independent command.

Minor Tactics are more or less mechanical. They may be called the drill movements of the battlefield ; they deal principally with material forces, with armament, fire, and formations ; and their chief end is the proper combination of the three arms upon the field of battle.

Grand Tactics are far less stereotyped. They are to Minor Tactics what Minor Tactics are to drill, *i.e.* the method of adapting the power of combination to the requirements of battle ; they deal principally with moral factors ; and their chief end is the concentration of superior force, moral and physical, at the decisive point.

It is not necessary to discuss this distinction at greater length. It is only necessary to ask anyone who believes that Home and Clery are sufficient in themselves to fit a soldier for independent command against a civilised enemy, whether he is of opinion that the art of Napoleon, Wellington, and Moltke is contained within the covers of those unassuming volumes ? Whether a man who has mastered those admirable chapters in which they treat of attack and defence, and of combined tactics, possesses all the knowledge—putting aside the question of practice—which a general should possess ? Or, again, will a thorough acquaintance with Hamley's 'Operations of War' make a strategist of the same type as any one of the three great leaders whose names have just been mentioned ?

Not one of those three books professes to be anything more

than elementary; and not one of those three distinguished authors has touched, except incidentally, upon the art of generalship.

The methods by which the great generals bound victory to their colours are scarcely mentioned in the tactical text-books; and in Hamley's 'Operations of War' the predominating influence of moral forces is alluded to only in a single paragraph. In short, the higher art of generalship, that section of military science to which formations, fire, and fortifications are subordinate, and which is called Grand Tactics, has neither manual nor text-book.

But whilst recognising the imperative necessity, if the three arms are to work in harmony, and the General-in-Chief is to find in his army a weapon which he can use with effect, of the thorough knowledge and constant practice of minor tactics, it should never be forgotten that success depends far more on the skill of the General than on the efficiency of the troops. There have been soldiers' battles, it is true, battles like Albuera and Inkermann, where the Generals gave no order, and which were won solely and entirely by the courage and endurance of the officers and men; but soldiers' battles are only exceptionally victories. The truth of Napoleon's saying that in war 'it is the man who is wanted and not men' is incontestable; and his own magnificent campaigns of 1796 and 1814 are sufficient in themselves to prove that an able general, although with far inferior numbers, need never despair of success. Let the converse—that superior numbers, if indifferently commanded, may be utterly defeated and demoralised—be taken to heart, and the supreme importance of good leading, and of thorough training in the art of leading, becomes at once apparent.

There is no instance more convincing of the truth of this assertion than our great war at the beginning of the last century. Of what fine material our armies were made there is no need to speak. But it is a significant fact that during the period of the Peninsular and Waterloo campaigns those magnificent soldiers, when neither Wellington nor his great lieutenants, Hill and Graham, commanded them, were unable to win victories. Pakenham, with a force of those veterans whom Wellington

declared could go anywhere and do anything, was decisively defeated by the American Militia at New Orleans. Other veterans were beaten by their own general at Plattsburg. The unfortunate expedition to Walcheren, undertaken in the same year as Corunna, cost the army the lives of thousands without a single success to compensate; in the same year 5,000 English soldiers were turned out of Egypt by the Turks; and the campaign in Holland of 1814, although conducted by Lord Lynedoch, was not fortunate. It is a melancholy fact that throughout the great war the army suffered in its leaders. We may recall the Duke's scathing observations to the Military Secretary:—

'When I reflect upon the character and attainments of some of the general officers of this army, and consider that these are the persons on whom I am to rely to lead columns against the French generals, and who are to carry my instructions into execution, I tremble; and, as Lord Chesterfield said of the generals of his day, "I only hope that when the enemy reads the list of their names he trembles as I do." And —— will be a nice addition to the list! However, I pray God and the Horse Guards to deliver me from General —— and Colonel ——.'

I may be accused of merely repeating truisms; but in the present condition of tactical study it seems to me that it is scarcely out of place to emphasise the momentous issues that hang on the higher leading. This study, as I have already suggested, suffers for want of expansion. It has been restricted to Minor Tactics, while Grand Tactics, the Art of Command, if not forgotten altogether, have been very generally overlooked. Yet it is to Grand Tactics that Napoleon referred when he said, 'Read and re-read the campaigns of the great captains.' He was not thinking of Minor Tactics, of formations, of fire, and of the combination of the three arms, for he added the list of the campaigns which he considered useful. And what were they? They were not alone the campaigns in which the troops had been armed with the weapons then in use. They were not his own campaigns, or those of the Archduke Charles, or those of Wellington; but they were campaigns in

which the battles were fought out with swords and spears, with slings and arrows, in which the infantry wore armour, and the cavalry used no reins; they were the campaigns of Alexander, Hannibal, and Cæsar, as well as those of Gustavus Adolphus and Turenne.

I cannot believe that he thought there were lessons in Minor Tactics to be drawn from the battles of Cannæ or Arbela, or that the formations of the legion and the phalanx could be advantageously employed against the musket and the cannon, or that the combination of slingers and archers with swordsmen and spearmen could have anything in common with the co-operation of infantry and artillery. It was, on the contrary, the Art of Command he had in mind when he penned his advice; the stratagems of Hannibal, the manœuvres of Alexander, Cæsar's utilisation of moral forces, and the strategic marches of Turenne. His meaning, however, has not been always rightly interpreted; it is not generally understood; and it is, perhaps, for this reason that the study of military history is very largely confined to the study of Minor Tactics.

I must again say a few words to prevent misunderstanding. My remarks are by no means intended to apply to everyone. I have not the very slightest intention of claiming to be first to explain the true meaning of Napoleon's advice. The list of recent publications and forthcoming articles would in itself be sufficient to prove that there are many students of Grand Tactics amongst English officers. We have Lord Wolseley attaining the highest literary fame as the biographer of Marlborough, Lord Roberts engaged on the Life of Wellington, and Sir Evelyn Wood recording the achievements of cavalry. Nor is the study, and even the writing, of history a new feature amongst officers of high rank. The Great Duke himself was not only an indefatigable student, but he was also an author. He had been accustomed to study his profession, so he told Sir James Shaw Kennedy, for some hours daily throughout the greater part of his military career, and in one of the volumes of his despatches is to be found a long review of Napoleon's Russian campaign, written in 1825. Moreover, the majority of our military heroes

are numbered amongst the students; Wolfe, Sir John Moore, Picton, Craufurd, Sir Charles Napier, and Sir Henry Havelock. But, at the same time, notwithstanding this array of famous names, I believe that regimental officers, as a body, are content with Minor Tactics, with Home and Clery; or, if they go further, with such study of recent campaigns as will enable them to understand what a battle between modern armies means, and to realise the effect of modern fire. With the art of independent command they have little concern, and Napoleon's maxim carries no weight whatever.

I venture to think, however, that as all officers may find themselves some day in independent command before the enemy, responsible not only for the lives of their men but for the honour of their country, lessons in Grand Tactics are amongst the most important that can be drawn for the present from the past.

Unfortunately, the study is difficult and laborious. There are no convenient summaries, like those of Home and Clery; and without a competent instructor it is no simple matter to extract profit from reading the account of some complicated campaign. There is no guide to tell the student what to look for, or to what points he should direct special attention. To include such summary here would be impossible, even if I were capable of making it complete, but as I have gone so far, it would be scarcely satisfactory if I made no endeavour to point out the lines on which the study of Grand Tactics should proceed.

In the first place, what campaigns should be studied? Now, there is an impression abroad that it is of little use, at all events for the acquirement of tactical knowledge, to study campaigns in which breech-loaders and rifled guns were not employed.

But after what I have said as to the true meaning of Napoleon's advice, it is scarcely necessary to say that it still holds good; increase of range and more rapid loading, although they must always be taken into consideration, have affected Grand Tactics to a very small degree. It is to the campaigns of the great masters of war that we must still turn if we would learn the art of generalship, and the campaigns of Marlborough

and Wellington are as valuable for this purpose as those of Moltke or of Skobeleff.

Perhaps the most useful lesson to be drawn from the famous campaigns of history concerns the great principle of moral force; and regarding this principle experience, both as student and instructor, teaches me that a few words of explanation will not be wasted.

'Moral force,' says Napoleon, 'is to the physical,' that is, to numbers, armament, and training, as 'three to one.' Clausewitz, the most profound of all writers on war, says that every one understands what this moral force is and how it is applied. But Clausewitz was a genius, and geniuses and clever men have a distressing habit of assuming that everyone understands what is perfectly clear to themselves. They often forget that they are speaking to or writing for men of average intelligence, who do not reflect deeply, and have to be told important truths instead of discovering them for themselves. Referring to my own experience, I am convinced that the young officer of average intelligence but seldom grasps the meaning of Napoleon's maxim. He accepts it, as soldiers accept the words of the greatest soldier of them all, without question. But he gets no further. His text-books repeat the maxim, but being concerned with minor tactics only, he does not discuss it; and there is no treatise, so far as I am aware, which explains what the nature of this moral force is or how it has been utilised in the field. Nothing is more difficult than to drive into men's heads the fact that the great generals took this moral force into account in all their plans of battles, that the effects they expected from their combinations were based upon moral considerations, and that it was because of this that we call them 'great.' To those, therefore, who find themselves in the same predicament as I certainly was once myself—accepting the maxim without in the least understanding it—I venture to add a few words which may enlighten them.

Such enlightenment may prove of no immediate benefit. But no general, no commander of an independent force, can hope for great and decisive success without grasping Napoleon's meaning so thoroughly that he is always trying to express it in

action; and the sooner officers gain this knowledge the more familiar will it become—the more likely to be utilised when their time for command arrives. Moreover, when they read of war, when they hear of war, or when they criticise generals and operations, as young officers sometimes do, they will see things from a new point of view, listen to them with a more intelligent interest, and perhaps be more judicious in the way in which they apportion praise or blame.

The first thing is to realise that in war we have to do not so much with numbers, arms, and manœuvres, as with human nature.

What did Napoleon find in the history of the campaigns of Alexander, Hannibal, and Julius Cæsar? Not merely a record of marches and manœuvres, of the use of entrenchments, or of the general principles of attack and defence. This is the mechanical part—the elementary part—of the science of command.

No; he found in those campaigns a complete study of human nature under the conditions that exist in war; human nature affected by discipline, by fear, by the need of food, by want of confidence, by over-confidence, by the weight of responsibility, by political interests, by patriotism, by distrust, and by many other things. The lessons he learned from the campaigns he studied so carefully were not mechanical movements and stereotyped combinations. He was not merely an imitator. Not one of his campaigns has its exact prototype in history—but he learned from history the immense value of the moral element in war; to utilise it to the utmost became instinctive, and he played upon the hearts of his enemies and of his own men with a skill which has never been surpassed.

Now, in the long history of war we find a number of generals who were good soldiers, men who understood the mechanical part of their business, who could maintain discipline, who could organise, who could handle their troops carefully in attack, who had a good eye for country, and who could select and occupy strong defensive positions, and yet, although they escape the reproach of being bad generals, no one ever calls them 'great.' Read through their campaigns

and you will find it hard to point to occasions where they actually broke the ordinary rules of war; you will certainly never find occasions where they ran unnecessary risks. Now, turn to the campaigns of the great generals, and you will find the rules of war violated again and again, until you get into a hopeless confusion as to what the real rules of war are; you will find them conducting operations which, if they were not the enterprises of a lunatic, were apparently full of risk, and you find it an easy matter to point out some obvious manœuvre or simple precaution on the enemy's part which would have ruined the whole operation. But the curious fact is this, that the operations very seldom did fail, and that, if they did, it was not because the rules of war were set at defiance, but because of some fault in execution.

The explanation of the brilliant successes that the great generals gained in spite of rules and against enormous risks is to be found in the fact that they looked not only on the physical side—on the numbers and armament of the enemy—but that they saw his weaknesses; they played upon his susceptibilities and apprehensions; every movement that they made was calculated to destroy the *moral* and confidence of both general and soldiers; if they made movements which set at defiance the rules of war, it was because they were aware that the moral influence of such movements made them absolutely safe; and if in appearance great risks were run, it was with the full knowledge that the enemy's character or his apprehensions would prevent him from taking those simple precautions by which the critics point out that the whole enterprise might easily have been ruined. 'They had penetrated,' to use a phrase of the late Colonel Charles Brackenbury, 'their adversary's brain.'

These considerations are often overlooked by those who know little of war. In order to explain satisfactorily the causes of success which they are unable, from their lack of knowledge to comprehend, they put the whole thing down to chance, and brand the commander with the epithet of lucky. Now, that there are lucky generals it is impossible to deny; but the epithet is more appropriately applied to those who

commit flagrant mistakes and get off scot-free, because they have to deal with an incapable antagonist. To call generals who are invariably successful 'lucky' is as much as to say that there is no such thing as skill in generalship, or no such quality as aptitude for war. You may call them 'unlucky,' if you will, when their plans are ruined by some incapable subordinate; but when you try to find a reason for their long roll of successful campaigns and cannot do so, consider whether it is not possible that what you call 'luck' is the result of profound calculation, of a grasp of the situation far wider than your own, and of a utilisation of moral force which even special correspondents do not always understand, and which the official despatches do not reveal.

The ordinary general, on the other hand, even if he takes into account the peculiar characteristics of the enemy, does not, like the great generals, take into account the character of the hostile commander; and he runs none of those apparent risks which bring about decisive victories, because he neither understands his opponents' weaknesses, nor the art of turning them to his own advantage. He does not set mind against mind; and yet war is more of a struggle between two human intelligences than between two masses of armed men. The great general, whilst raising to the utmost the *moral* of his own men, reckoning up that of the enemy, and lowering it in every possible way, does not give his first attention to these points, nor to the numbers against him. He looks beyond them, beyond his own troops, and across the enemy's lines, until he comes to the quarters occupied by the enemy's leader, and then he puts himself in that leader's place, and with that leader's eyes and mind he looks at the situation; he realises his weaknesses, the points for the security of which he is most apprehensive; he considers what his enemy's action will be if he is attacked here or threatened there, and he sees for himself, looking at things with his enemy's eyes, whether or no apparent risks are not absolutely safe. If he knows something of his opponent's personal character he has a powerful weapon put into his hand. 'It is to be ignorant and blind,' wrote the Grecian biographer of Hannibal, 'in the science of commanding

armies, to think that a general has anything more important to do than to apply himself to learning the inclinations and character of his adversary,' and to Hannibal's observance of this maxim he ascribes the extraordinary victories of the great Carthaginian. Look at Napoleon. When his luggage was captured during the retreat from Moscow, Sir Robert Wilson, the English Commissioner with the Russians, relates that there were found amongst his private papers biographies of all the Russian generals opposed to him. In the Waterloo campaign again, his first move, when he found himself in a position to attack the Allies in detail, was to strike at the Prussians, knowing that Blücher, impetuous fighter as he was, would never decline a battle in order to fall back and combine with his more cautious ally. Look at Wellington. It is Napier who tells the story. When the British army was in the Pyrenees, entangled in very difficult country, very skilfully defended by the French, the Duke on one occasion gave orders for a certain movement. As soon as he had done so, he rode up to the outposts to observe the French for himself, and the men cheered him all along the line. The French commander, Marshal Soult, surrounded by his staff, was on the opposite hill, and Wellington observed their uneasiness at hearing the cheers across the valley. 'Soult,' he said, 'is a very cautious commander. He will delay his attack to find out what these cheers mean; that will give time for the 6th Division to arrive and I shall beat him.' The event turned out exactly as he anticipated.

Again, let us go across the Atlantic. The Great Civil War in America was fought out by generals who were, some of them, in the first rank, for the respect they paid to the moral aspect of war was remarkable. The greatest of all was Lee, and his military secretary writes as follows: 'He studied his adversary, knew his peculiarities, and adapted himself to them. His own methods no one could foresee; he varied them with every change in the commanders opposed to him. He had one method with McClellan, another with Pope, another with Hooker, and yet another with Grant. But for a knowledge of his own resources, of the field, and of the adversary, some

of his movements might have been rash. As it was, they were wisely bold.'

The next point I would refer to is stratagem; and on this I think it is hardly necessary to dilate at length. It is not difficult to understand the importance of deceiving and bewildering your opponent; to realise the force of Stonewall Jackson's advice, 'Always mystify, mislead, and surprise the enemy.' Surprise is the greatest of all foes; by stratagem surprise is made possible, and stratagems have been used since the night when the army of the Midianites, 'like a multitude of beasts, with camels innumerable as the sands of the sea-shore,' fled before 'the trumpets and the empty pitchers, and the lamps within the pitchers,' of Gideon's 300 men. Had Lord Wolseley completed his biography of Marlborough, there would be no occasion to remind English officers that the greatest of English soldiers was only equalled as a master of stratagem by Hannibal and Napoleon. If upon this account alone, the story of his campaigns is in the highest degree instructive, and we may trust it will not be long before English soldiers are as familiar with his methods of war as with those of Wellington.

Lastly, there is the use of ground. Many soldiers may perhaps be inclined to disagree with me when I say that instruction as to use of ground may be gathered from books. I do not for a moment wish to assert that any amount of reading will compensate for the study of ground on the ground itself. But I am still of opinion that there is very much to be learnt in this respect from great campaigns, and that the value and scope of the practical study can be very largely enhanced by theoretical knowledge.

On this question of ground the text-books of Minor Tactics give us some assistance. For instance, it is one of the most valuable characteristics of Clery that the capabilities and influence of the ground are alluded to in every chapter. But, as the book is little concerned with generalship, there are few allusions as to the manner in which Napoleon or Wellington made use of natural features; there are no illustrations of their methods, and, indeed, if the subject were treated thoroughly

from the point of view of Grand Tactics, a larger volume than Clery would be the result. On this point Hamley is admirable, and his chapters on topographical obstacles, and the use to which they may be put, form an excellent introduction to the study of this question from a strategical point of view. But he considers it from this point of view alone, and so, as regards Grand Tactics, we must go to the campaigns of the great captains, follow their manœuvres on the best maps we can procure, learn with them to recognise the weak points of a position, to utilise the cover which the country affords in order to mass unexpectedly against some one of those points, and to derive that advantage from natural features which has so often outweighed the advantages of numbers.

I may here anticipate the objection that increased range of firearms has altered everything. This increase, as I have already remarked, must always be taken into consideration, and there can be no doubt that the power of modern fire has made ground which was formerly eminently favourable for attack eminently favourable for defence; and, also, that as regards defensive positions, the necessity of great depth of cover for supports and reserves, and for second and third lines from the far-reaching shrapnel, has changed the conditions under which troops are distributed. But, in reply to the objection, I assert that *general principles*, so far as Grand Tactics are concerned, still hold good. For instance, if we select a defensive position Wellington's dispositions under such circumstances are no bad guide. Not only may we notice his use of advanced posts, but the positions of his second and third lines are well worth consideration, and how it was they were always at the right place at the right time. If we are inferior in artillery—as he generally was—is it not useful to consider his occupation of a position under the same conditions—the skirmishers half way down the slope, drawing the enemy on, whilst the main line was hidden behind the crest at such distance as prevented the enemy, when his columns reached the height, from bringing up his guns to support his infantry?

Again, in the attack; look at the extraordinary profit to which Napoleon turned those natural obstacles perpendicular to

the line of battle at Rivoli, at Friedland, and at Dresden; at the value in a counter-stroke of such tactical points as the village and the knoll which formed the centre of the Allied position at Austerlitz. Look at the almost precipitous slopes —as steep as and far higher than the famous Rotheberg at Spicheren, up which he led two army corps during the night which preceded the surprise and victory of Jena! Look at Lee, in the great campaign of 1864, where he allowed an army, double his numbers, to turn his flank, enticing his adversary into the jungle which is called the 'Wilderness of Virginia'— a jungle of which his men knew every path, and of which the Federals knew nothing—in order that he might overwhelm their unwieldy masses.

I am tempted here to give a very brief description of Austerlitz. It was the most brilliant, because the most skilful, of Napoleon's victories—and as the result of a combination of the application of moral factors—of stratagem, and the use of ground, affords a most forcible and complete illustration of the art of Grand Tactics.

In November 1806, Napoleon was encamped with his army east of Brünn, in Moravia, with his line of communications running southwards to Vienna. At Olmütz a Russian and Austrian army was slowly assembling. Another Austrian army was in Hungary, and it was probable that Prussia might declare war. Napoleon pretended to enter into negotiations, and on the Allied army moving forward from Olmütz, he permitted it to capture an advanced detachment.

His inactivity before Brünn—so different from his usual rapid offensive—his apparent desire for peace, and his permitting his detachment to be captured without an effort to support it, led the Allied generals to believe that he feared a battle, and would retreat on their approach in the direction of Vienna. As he had anticipated, whilst continuing their forward movement they threw forward their left, with the evident design of cutting him off from his base of operations. On December 1, they arrived opposite the French position, and the tendency to turn the enemy's right was still more manifest.

The ground on which the battle was fought is an undulating

plain—lying between two parallel chains of mountains, which run east and west at a distance of some ten or twelve miles. Napoleon had taken up a position behind a brook, where the ground gave some cover, with his left flank almost touching the northern of the two ranges, and with a great gap between his right and the southern range. Through this gap—several miles in width—it seemed easy to penetrate, to turn his flank, and block his communications. The Allies fell into the trap. The very line of their bivouac fires, blazing on the opposite ridge the night before the battle, revealed to their astute antagonist the movement projected for the morrow and, in a proclamation to his soldiers, he not only told them what the enemy would try to do, but explained the manœuvre by which he should win the battle.

This manœuvre was as follows :—

The allies were posted on a long bare ridge, of which the culminating point was a commanding hill, with a little village half-way up the slope. Napoleon determined to attack their right vigorously, to permit their left wing to get well away on its great outflanking manœuvre, and then, with 30,000 men—in one huge mass—to attack their weak centre, to seize the village and the hill, and by the occupation of this strong tactical point, the value of which his trained eye for ground had detected, to cut their army in two.

In order, moreover, to draw the turning movement on, he showed only very few troops on the threatened flank, the division with which he intended to hold the outflanking attack being encamped during the night several miles distant from the field of battle.

His anticipations were fulfilled to the letter. The result of his extraordinary combinations was the destruction of nearly half the opposing army, and when the original equality of force is considered, it must be allowed that the genius of a great general has seldom been more effectively displayed.

But even if there still be some who do not admit that the principles on which Wellington and Napoleon acted are applicable to modern conditions, they will at least allow that an intelligent study of their battles will emphasise the

importance of ground, and will induce the student not only to appreciate the value of topographical features, but to try to acquire that eye for country which is a distinguishing characteristic of every great general.

These are only some of the elements of Grand Tactics, but they are among the more important. And it is well to note that the study of the art of command need not necessarily entail a great amount of reading. On this point some remarks made by Lord Wolseley at a lecture in Dublin are undoubtedly sound.

'A certain amount of reading,' he said, 'and a certain amount of study is absolutely necessary for any man who ever wishes to command troops in the field; and,' he added, 'so far as I know of the study of war, the great thing is to read a little and think a great deal—and think of it over and over again.' I do not believe that this advice can be bettered. A few campaigns thoroughly studied will do more to strengthen the intellect, to develop a capacity for hard thinking, and to teach the art of leading troops, than fifty campaigns that have been merely skimmed. General knowledge is often superficial. There is no great benefit, for instance, to be derived from reading the whole of Napier or the history of Napoleon, but if, in the course of a single winter, an officer were to work out and think out the campaign of 1796 in Italy, or the campaign of 1812 in Spain, he could not fail to profit by his study. When I say 'work out and think out,' I do not imply that he should be content with reading the narrative and the criticisms, and with following the operations on the map. By far the most useful way of studying military history is to find out from your books, so far as possible, what the situation was at any given time; then to shut the books, take the map, decide for yourself what you would have done had you been in the place of one of the commanding generals, and write your orders. You are thus dealing with a problem which actually occurred; and in working out the solution you are training your judgment—and remember that war presents a constant series of problems to every officer who may hold an independent command. If an officer has been accustomed to deal with

military problems—even on paper—the powers of his mind and his natural ability will have been strengthened in the right direction, and the process of reasoning, which the solution of difficulties involves, will come easier to him than to the man who has to depend in all the excitement of battle on a rusty intellect and the chance of a happy inspiration. I may remind you that if there was one quality more than another in which the great captains excelled, it was their power of reasoning. The despatches of Napoleon, of Wellington, and of Moltke prove that they depended for success on their hard thinking and careful calculation. In fact, those magnificent strokes of genius which seemed dictated by the circumstances of the moment were due, as Napoleon himself implies, to a habit of calculation so rapid and so accurate as to seem to the uninitiated like inspiration.

'If,' he said, 'I always appear prepared, it is because before entering on an undertaking I have meditated for long and have foreseen what may occur. It is not genius which reveals to me suddenly and secretly what I have to do in circumstances unexpected by other people; it is reflection, it is meditation.'

Nor do I think that for the purpose of learning how to handle a small force of the three arms it is necessary to study a whole campaign. Such a study has the advantage of teaching strategy and tactics at one and the same time, and it is certainly a very thorough means of education. But it is by no means a bad thing if education proceeds by successive stages, and it is well to learn how to handle a small force on the field of battle before we aspire to manœuvre an army on the theatre of war.

I would advocate the study of a few famous battles, fought by able leaders. Take, for instance, such a series of English victories as the following:—Vimiera, Roliça, Sabugal, Redinha, Maida, Alexandria, Almaraz, Barossa. Here is a list of actions, fought by comparatively small forces, in all of which skilful generalship was displayed. No one can object that they are either dull reading, or would occupy too much time, and all of them will afford many suggestions as to stratagems, manœuvres, the art of concentrating superior force, and the occupation of positions. It does not appear to me too much

to ask the British officer of to-day to follow the example of Wellington, Wolfe, Moore, and Napier, and the course of study I suggest is not a very lengthy one. The first thing to do is to learn the tactical sections of the drill-books thoroughly —if not by heart. There the concentrated essence of modern fighting is to be found, based on the experience of many wars, and it is absolutely useless for any officer to study military history until he has the rules, maxims, and principles contained in the official manuals at his fingers' ends. Then, to elucidate points which are necessarily much condensed in the drill-books, read some manual on Minor Tactics. A single battle of the 1870 era will give you an idea of what a modern battlefield is like. Certain chapters in Mayne's 'Fire Tactics' are invaluable. When you have done this, set to work at Grand Tactics, study the battles of Napoleon, or of Wellington, or of Marlborough, sleep with 'The Soldier's Pocket-Book' under your pillow, and, so far as theory can help you, you will have done your duty.

If I were asked to put my finger on the most important 'Lesson that may be drawn from the Past,' I should reply that history teaches us that courage, numbers, armament, and entrenchments are of no avail if the troops are badly led, and that the honour and safety of the Empire depend on the skill and knowledge of British officers.

It is true that theory by itself will avail but little. When he was asked the best means of learning the art of war, Lord Seaton, the famous Colonel Colborne of the Peninsula and Waterloo, replied, 'Fighting, and a d—d deal of it.' But practical experience, at all events of civilised warfare, falls to the lot of few, and practical experience, unless it forms a basis for reflection, and is amplified by comparison with the experience of others, loses half its value.

Frederick the Great in speaking of officers who relied on their practical experience alone, caustically remarked that there were in the army two commissariat mules which had served through twenty campaigns, 'but,' he added significantly, 'they are mules still.' To draw all the good out of practical experience, reflection and comparison are necessary; but reflection and comparison will be impossible unless the brain has been

trained to think, and the mind is stored with knowledge of the past. Moreover, as regards Grand Tactics and the art of independent command, our experience as junior and subordinate officers is little to the point. It is rare indeed that an officer progresses gradually from the control of a small independent force to the control of a large one. As a very general rule his first experience of independent command is the charge of important operations. He rises suddenly from the position of a subordinate, obeying orders, and concerned only with the execution of a plan devised by another, to the vast responsibilities which attend the functions of a General-in-Chief, and, under the burden of those responsibilities, in order to bring his operations to a successful issue, he must rely on his natural aptitude for war, on his moral courage, and his theoretical knowledge of the art of command. Theory, applied to the profession of arms, is to some a word of most obnoxious sound. But it is obnoxious *only* to those who refuse to listen to the advice, or to take warning from the practice of Napoleon, of Wellington, and of many of our own most famous generals. 'It is not pretended,' says M'Dougall, 'that study will make a dull man brilliant, nor confer resolution and rapid decision on one who is timid and irresolute by nature; but the quick, the resolute, the daring, deciding and acting rapidly, as is their nature, will be all the more likely to decide and act correctly in proportion as they have studied the art they are called upon to practise.'

The following advice was written to a young officer by Sir Charles Napier, himself an example of the highest military genius, who not only did not disdain incessant study of his profession, but thought it indispensable to success: 'By reading you will be distinguished; without it, abilities are of little use. A man cannot learn his profession without constant study to prepare especially for the higher ranks. When in a post of responsibility, he has no time to read; and if he comes to such a post with an empty skull, it is then too late to fill it. Thus many people fail to distinguish themselves, and say they are unfortunate, which is untrue; their own previous idleness unfitted them to profit by fortune.'

In a time of peace when there is nothing to attract the minds of soldiers from the ordinary routine of their profession, and especially in a time when the chances of England becoming involved in a great war are considered as remote as they were in the era which preceded the Crimea and the Mutiny, there is a danger that the ordinary routine may be considered as sufficient for every purpose. Captain Mahan has pointed out that the cordial reception which his books on the Sea Power have met with in England is virtually an admission that the systematic study of 'The Conduct of War' has been to some degree overlooked by English sailors. The real reason of this enthusiasm, I believe, is rather that a most brilliant intellect has thrown new light upon the lessons of the past. But, be this as it may, we soldiers may take warning from our comrades of the Navy. It is true that in some respects we have been more fortunate than they, for we have been long provided with capable teachers. The Memoirs of Napoleon, the Despatches of Wellington, Napier's History of the Peninsular War, to take but a few amongst many, are as instinct with genius as even the works of Captain Mahan. We have only to ask ourselves whether these volumes are studied as they should be, and whether our younger officers realise the importance, and understand the methods, of preparing themselves for the responsibilities of command.

CHAPTER VIII

BATTLES AND LEADERS OF THE CIVIL WAR

THE War of Secession was waged on so vast a scale, employed so large a part of the manhood of both North and South America, aroused to such a degree the sympathies of the entire nation, and, in its brilliant achievements, both by land and sea, bears such splendid testimony to the energy and fortitude of their race, that in the minds of the American people it has roused an interest which shows no sign of abating. There are few families that did not contribute to swell the rolls of the gigantic armies which stretched in broad line of battle half across the continent; few homes where the voice of the mourner was not heard: few cities that cannot point with pride to the deeds of those who were born within their boundaries. It is little wonder, then, that this intense national interest should have found many channels of expression. The most valuable of these is the stupendous work published under the authority of the Senate, containing as it does every authentic document connected with even the most trivial incident of the war. This official record, however, is inaccessible to the majority of European readers; and its bulk, as well as the nature of its arrangement, renders it valueless to the general public, military or civilian.

The future historian of the great Translantic strife—for, excellent as is the work of the Comte de Paris, the history of the Civil War has yet to be written—will find in the autobiographies of many of the prominent leaders, and in the memoirs of others, compiled, as a rule, by members of their personal staff, material sufficient to enable him to explain the purpose of each strategic movement, and to ascribe victories

and disasters to their true causes. In addition to these sources of information, and to the numerous histories of individual regiments, almost every State has its Historical Society, and the records of their proceedings contain papers on every aspect of the conflict, contributed by men who took part in the events of which they write. These publications, however, are naturally of a more or less private nature, and their circulation is limited. It has been left to the enterprise of the 'Century' Company to give to the world the reminiscences thus accumulated, and to present them in the most attractive form. Almost without exception, every single article in the four large volumes edited by Messrs. Johnson and Buel is accompanied by illustrations of the ground over which the actions treated of were fought. These illustrations are of a high order of art; they have been executed with a most exact fidelity to nature; and there exists no other method which enables the student to realise so readily the features of the battlefields. Without incessant practice, few can reproduce in their mind's eye the landscape depicted on a map; and in any case, as military surveyors have lately recognised, sketches of nature, however rough, are most valuable adjuncts both to maps and reconnaissance reports. The authors of the various papers are of every rank, from the commander-in-chief to the private of infantry; and, taken as a whole, as a picture of war, or a study in tactical science, these volumes are without an equal.

As moral influences remain longest in the memory, and leave the most vivid impressions on the minds of those who have experience of service in the field, it is the moral aspect of war which is invariably the more prominent in personal narratives of marches and of battle. It is in this respect that the 'Century' papers have a value exceeding that of the official accounts of the wars of 1866 and 1870–1. No one can fail to remark the frankness with which the American soldiers speak of the vicissitudes of their campaigns. The simplicity with which they refer to the demoralisation of this brigade, the misbehaviour of that, to the neglect of precaution, to straggling on the march, and to skulking on the field, is in marked contrast to the euphemistic paragraphs compiled by the historical

section of the German staff. The latter are so worded as to maintain the invincibility of the German army. It is doubtless considered as essential to impress on successive generations of conscripts that their predecessors yielded neither to panic nor irresolution, as it is unnecessary to inform those who are still their foes how often victory trembled in the balance; and, therefore, we hear but half the truth. On the other hand, with full confidence in the well-proved courage of his people, and without formidable enemies to fear, no American soldier feels either shame or hesitation in admitting that the weakness of human nature prevailed at times over courage and goodwill.

'We heard all through the war,' says a New York private, 'that the army was eager to be led against the enemy. It must have been so, for truthful correspondents said so, and editors confirmed it; but when you came to hunt for this particular itch it was always the next regiment that had it. The truth is, when bullets are whacking against tree trunks and solid shot are cracking skulls like egg shells, the consuming passion in the heart of the average man is to get out of the way. Between the physical fear of going forward, and the moral fear of turning back, there is a predicament of exceptional awkwardness, from which a hidden hole in the ground would be a wonderfully welcome outlet.'[1]

It is in these admissions that the lessons contained in the 'Century' series are exceedingly valuable. Let a man know the exact worth of the instrument he uses, the extent to which its temper may be trusted, the conditions under which it may be expected to fail him, and he will be better armed than the man who looks upon it as an instrument which is to be relied upon under any circumstances whatever. The worth of the instrument with which war is waged depends chiefly on the moral influences to which it is subjected. Armies are not machines, but living organisms of intense susceptibility. It is the leader who reckons with the human nature of his own troops and of the enemy, rather than with their mere physical attributes, numbers, armament, and the like, who may hope to follow in Napoleon's

[1] *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. ii. p. 662.

footsteps. To create physical strength in an army is far more easy than to endow that army with moral superiority. 'Many a man,' says the Spanish proverb, 'can make a guitar; few can make music from it.'

'In the "Century" papers,' writes General Maurice, 'you get a sense of dealing with armies of flesh and blood, and not mere war-game counters, unique in my experience.'[1] It is the absence of this element that makes the German histories such terribly dry reading, and, in one important particular, so deficient in instruction. It is its presence in the volumes before us that not only teaches the reader to appreciate the truth of Napoleon's maxim, but suggests the methods in which it may be applied.

There are many questions of importance on which much light has been thrown by the events of the Secession War—for instance, the naval operations, mounted infantry, field entrenchments, and the relations of the Government with the leaders of its armies. To these, however, and to other tempting themes, I shall make no further allusion. My present purpose is to examine the history of the war from one aspect only. The great conflict was fought out by unprofessional soldiers, by a national militia, leavened by a sprinkling of regular officers. The armies of both North and South differed little in constitution from an integral portion of our own army of defence. The soldiers were of our own stock. Their experience, therefore, will help us to anticipate the shortcomings likely to occur amongst our own volunteers should they be called upon to take the field, and may enlighten us as to the measures by which these shortcomings may be most readily corrected.

The bombardment and surrender of Port Sumter, which first announced to the world that the Northern and the Southern States of America, in Lincoln's homely but expressive phrase, could 'no longer keep house,' took place in April 1861. The regular forces numbered but 15,500, and the greater part of the troops were far away on the Indian frontier. The men held fast to the Union. The officers took the part of their native States, and, under their supervision, armies of volunteers

[1] *Journal of R.U.S.I.*, vol. xxxiii. p. 1082.

were immediately mustered by either side. Three months elapsed between the assembly of the troops and their meeting on the field of battle, and by both sides this interval was devoted to the work of drill, discipline, and organisation. Men and officers were, generally speaking, without experience of war; and, with the exception of a small minority, the regular officers were utterly ignorant of soldiering. Some few had imbibed a slight knowledge of drill at the military academies which, on the model of West Point, had been established in several of the Southern States. Many had served in the militia and home guards, but these organisations were seldom mustered, and had no more instruction or discipline than was required to quell a riot or take part in a procession.

In the Union States, more intensely democratic than the Confederate, it by no means followed that the more experienced were placed in command. Commissions were given by the suffrages of the men in the ranks, and officers who owed their position to the favour of their former comrades were generally careful not to lose their popularity by the enforcement of an obnoxious discipline. The hold of the officers on their commands was thus of the slightest in the North, and it was but little stronger in the South. The men resented obedience to those who were superior neither in social standing nor professional knowledge to themselves. Of the regular officers available the Confederates made the best use, immediately assigning them to the command of brigades and to posts on the general staff. Nevertheless, despite the presence of these trained instructors, when the two principal armies met at Bull Run, an insignificant stream in Virginia within thirty miles of Washington, the Union capital, on July 21, they both were weak in discipline; and the event goes far to prove that ninety days of camp life were insufficient to give citizen soldiers more than the outward semblance of a regular army.

As regards the actual fighting qualities of the men, the battle was no discredit to either side. Indiscipline was the cause both of the defeat of the Northerners and of the failure of the Southerners to pursue.

'We had good organisation, good men, but no cohesion, no

real discipline, no respect for authority, no real knowledge of war. Both armies were fairly defeated, and whichever had stood fast the other would have run.'[1]

'The Federals left the field about half-past four. Until then they had fought wonderfully well for raw troops. There were no fresh forces on the field to support or encourage them, and the men seemed to be seized simultaneously by the conviction that it was no use to do anything more, and they might as well start home. Cohesion was lost, the organisation being disintegrated, and the men walked quickly off. There was no special excitement, except that arising from the frantic efforts of officers to stop men who paid little or no attention to anything that was said.'[2]

'At four o'clock on the 21st there were more than 12,000 volunteers on the battlefield who had entirely lost their regimental organisation. They could no longer be handled as troops, for the officers and men were not together. Men and officers mingled promiscuously; and it is worthy of remark that this disorganisation did not result from fear.'[3]

Nor were their opponents in better plight. It is related that as the Confederate President was riding to the field at about four o'clock on the day of battle, 'he met a stream of panic-stricken rebel soldiers, and heard such direful tidings from the front that his companions were thoroughly convinced that the Confederates had lost the day, and implored him to turn back.'[4]

Early in the afternoon the Confederates had been driven back by a skilfully conceived movement against their left flank. The generals arrived upon the scene.

'We heard the commanders resolutely stemming the further flight of the routed forces, but vainly endeavouring to restore order, and our own efforts were as futile.

'Every segment of line we succeeded in forming dissolved

[1] *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, vol. i. pp. 181–2.

[2] *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. i. p. 191, article by General Fry.

[3] *The Outbreak of the Rebellion*, Nicolay, pp. 195–6.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 197.

while another was being formed; more than 2,000 men were shouting each some suggestion to his neighbour, their voices mingling with the noise of the shells hurtling overhead, and all words of command drowned in the confusion and uproar.'[1]

More noteworthy, perhaps, was the inability of the Federal troops, although they had been exercised for the best part of three months in camp, to perform the very trifling marches necessary to bring them into contact with the enemy in good order and in good time.

'The march preceding the battle demonstrated little else than the general laxity of discipline; for with all my personal efforts I could not prevent the men straggling for water, blackberries, or anything else they fancied.'[2]

'General McDowell was anxious to reach Centreville on the 17th, and so to fight on the 19th instead of the 21st, but the regiments, who had only marched from Vienna (six miles), were so fatigued that they either could not or would not push on six miles further the same evening. Their fatigue was partially caused by delays and dawdling, consequent on the ignorance of the rules of marching on the part of the officers, and by the undisciplined state of the troops; and also by the absence of good marching qualities in Americans, and their inability to carry even the slight weights required in light marching order.'[3]

Had the attack been made on the 19th the Northern army would have been opposed by but half the numbers that were present on the 21st.

The disaster of Bull Run roused the Northern States to a truer appreciation of their difficulties, and the President immediately assembled near Washington an army of more than 140,000 men, increased during the winter to 220,000 with 520 guns. In the seven months which elapsed between the first great battle and the second attempt of the North to crush the main army of the Confederates, this force, thanks to the skill

[1] *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. i. p. 201, article by General Beauregard.

[2] *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, vol. i. p. 181.

[3] *History of the American War*, by Lt.-Col. Fletcher, Scots Fusilier Guards, vol. i. pp. 129-30.

and patience of General McClellan, its new commander, gradually assumed the organisation and aspect of a real army. A beneficial change was instituted in the terms of enlistment; the battalions were asked to volunteer for three years or for the duration of the war; and both officers and men set themselves to work more earnestly than their unfortunate predecessors. At the beginning of April 1862, McClellan, selecting the shortest line of invasion, transferred the greater part of his army by sea to Fort Monroe. Richmond, the seat of the Confederate Government, was the objective of the campaign, and so, on the Yorktown Peninsula, already historically famous for the surrender of Cornwallis in 1781, began that series of operations which culminated in the 'Seven Days' Battles,' the defeat of the Federals by Lee, and the withdrawal of their troops to Washington. Whether this repulse was due to the shortcomings of the leader or to the interference of the Government is a question with which we have no concern. The efficiency of the officers and men is the subject of this enquiry and it is only right to state that in the desperate fighting round Richmond, the troops showed far greater stability and endurance than at Bull Run. At the same time they had not yet by any means attained either the consistency or the mobility of professional soldiers. The men had not yet acquired the habit of mechanical obedience, which alone makes an army an effective weapon in the hands of its commander. Where duty became irksome it was neglected. Straggling on the line of march was a conspicuous evil. The details connected with sanitation and the care of equipment were generally overlooked, and the health of the troops and the efficiency of their armament suffered in consequence.

Amongst the critics of the campaign are two experienced European soldiers, the Comte de Paris and Colonel Fletcher. The one served on McClellan's staff during the operations, the other accompanied his army as a spectator. The French prince was prejudiced in favour of the North; the Englishman's sympathies were with the aristocracy of the South; but, divergent as were their predilections, they are at one in pointing out that the bonds of discipline in the army of the Potomac,

as the force commanded by McClellan had come to be called, were weak in the extreme. It is in the pages of these eye-witnesses that evidence as to the condition of the Northern troops can best be found.

One of their most serious shortcomings was that on the field of battle the men were accustomed to conduct themselves in accordance rather with the dictates of their own judgment than with the orders of their superiors. At Cold Harbor, where Lee struck the isolated right wing of the Federals, and compelled McClellan to make his famous change of base from the York to the James River, both sides fought with the greatest courage and persistence, and it was not till after seven hours of battle that 50,000 Confederates drove 35,000 Unionists from their strong position on the left bank of the Chickahominy. General Porter, commanding the Northern troops engaged, had exhausted his reserves some time before his line yielded; but fresh troops had been sent across the river by McClellan, and an orderly retreat might have been easily effected, for the Confederates were in no good trim for further action. As it was—'When the crash came no one could stop the current of fugitives: large numbers of men without order, with arms in their hands, left the ranks and walked to the rear, officers were intermingled with them, in some instances leading their companies away from instead of towards the enemy. There was little or no panic; the men said they were weary, had had enough fighting for the day or were in want of ammunition; some squadrons of cavalry attempted to stop the fugitives, the officers threatening them with their revolvers; but all in vain. . . . The regular infantry regiments preserved their discipline better than the volunteers (as they had done at Bull Run), and many, without yielding to the influence of the now widely spread panic, fell, disdaining to fly. As the stream of fugitives, ambulances, and caissons (the guns themselves were abandoned) arrived on the other side of the Chickahominy, they were halted and formed into some sort of order by a line of sentries and strong patrols which guarded the bridge.'[1]

Now this retreat from Cold Harbor did not resemble the

[1] *History of the American War*, vol. ii. p. 88.

rout of Austerlitz or the débâcle of Woerth. It was not the wild rush of a terror-struck mob seeking safety at any price, as at Vittoria or Waterloo. It was not due to lack of courage or to demoralisation, but to defective discipline. But there is something more demanded from soldiers than the struggle for victory; there is the task of preventing defeat degenerating into irretrievable disaster. It was precisely this task that the Federal volunteers were incapable of executing. Men habituated to discipline, when defeat stares them in the face, throng together, for they have imbibed the instinct that only in unity is there safety. They can trust their comrades and their commanders; they have learnt the necessity of mutual support, and the common danger serves but to bind the ranks the closer. But with troops half-disciplined defeat, for a time at least, has the effect of disintegration; order vanishes, and, however great the courage of the individual soldier, a well-trained enemy, vigorous in pursuit, has such an army at his mercy. It is necessary, therefore, that soldiers should be capable of doing more than sustaining the shock of combat. Every battle cannot be a victory, for war is the playground of Fortune. An army must have stamina sufficient to preserve itself from annihilation: and that stamina is given by discipline alone.

Cold Harbor was but the first of the 'Seven Days' Battles.' Day after day the Northern army, falling back through swamp and forest, battled with Lee's victorious troops. But there was no further disaster. Under the most adverse and dispiriting circumstances, the Federals fairly held their own until they reached the strong position of Malvern Hill. There McClellan turned at bay, and repulsed with heavy slaugher the disjointed attacks of the Confederates. No further fighting took place south of Richmond, and the army of the Potomac was soon afterwards transferred to the river from which it drew its name. It may fairly be asked how it happened that the Federals, after their defeat at Cold Harbor, found strength to show so bold a front, and to administer such sharp blows during the retreat? An army without the discipline to struggle against defeat is an easy prey to a vigorous foe; but the Confederate pursuit was by no means vigorous. For a whole

day Lee was baffled by the change of base. The cavalry, who might have cut the enemy's line of retreat, had been despatched to break up his original line of supplies upon the York River, and did not arrive till their opportunity had passed. Maps of the country and guides were wanting. Unpractised generals and staff officers failed to accomplish the combined movements ordered by the commander-in-chief; and even Stonewall Jackson for once broke his own famous maxim 'never to "let up" in a pursuit.'

Having relieved Richmond, Lee turned on Pope, who with an inferior army lay between the Southern capital and Washington. Pope was outgeneralled and outmarched, and the second battle of Bull Run was as decisive a victory for the South as its predecessor. Then followed the Confederate invasion of Maryland; the capture of Harper's Ferry; the drawn battle of the Antietam, where Lee with 40,000 men held his ground against the army of the Potomac, although it had been recruited to twice his strength; his leisurely retreat; and in December, to close a year of many battles, the bloody repulse of the same army of the Potomac at Fredericksburg in Virginia. During this period, on one occasion only, at Malvern Hill, were the Federals decisively victorious in any considerable engagement; the remainder of the great actions which stand out as landmarks in the history of the time, if not Southern triumphs, were in no wise disasters.

Now, if there is one thing more than another apparent to the student of the Civil War, it is that the soldiers on both sides were exceedingly well matched in courage and endurance. It is evident, therefore, that if we would discover the reasons of the superiority of the army of Northern Virginia over the army of the Potomac we must look further than the temper and spirit of the regimental officers and men. Northern writers have attempted to account for this superiority in a variety of ways. Even Colonel Fletcher has been induced to lend his support to the statement that the agricultural pursuits, the hunting, the riding, the open-air existence of a majority of the Southerners were better adapted to produce good fighting material than the sedentary occupations of the New Englanders. But, as the

Confederate ranks were composed in part of town-bred men, so in the Union armies not only battalions, but brigades and divisions, were recruited from the backwoodsmen of Wisconsin and Ohio, from the farmers of Pennsylvania and the lumberers of Maine. Moreover, in all soldierly qualities, the contingents furnished by the crowded cities of the eastern seaboard never at any period of the conflict suffered by comparison with the Western pioneers. There are those, too, who allege that whilst the *gaudium certaminis* inflamed the passionate nature of the Southerner, the colder temperament of the Northern citizen shunned rather than sought the arbitrament of battle; others, citing Jackson's remark that 'he could beat anything with a herd of cattle behind it,' would have us believe that the certainty of finding ample supplies in the hostile camps nerved the resolution of a half-starved soldiery. I am of opinion, however, that in order to discover the secret of the Confederate successes there is no need either to search for nice distinctions in races closely akin, or to appeal to the fact that Lee and his great lieutenant, Jackson, were a head and shoulders above any Union leaders who had as yet appeared. It was not only the genius of its commanders that won the laurels of the Virginian army. Many of its victories were achieved by sheer hard fighting, they were the work of the soldiers themselves, and that the Confederates were able to wrest success from opponents of equal vigour was due to their superior organisation, more accurate shooting, and above all to their stronger discipline. As to the first, the Federal Government allowed the pernicious principle of the election of the officers by the rank and file to flourish without restraint; and secondly the strength of the army was kept up not by a constant stream of recruits to the seasoned battalions, but by the formation of new regiments. Thus battalions which had served in more than one campaign, and had gained experience and discipline, were soon reduced to the strength of a couple of companies; whilst others lately raised boasted a full complement of rifles, but were without officers, commissioned or non-commissioned, capable of instructing or leading their unpractised men. One State, Wisconsin, created no new regiments, but maintained the

strength of those she had originally sent into the field; and so 'we estimate a Wisconsin regiment equal to an ordinary brigade. I believe that five hundred new men added to an old and experienced regiment were more valuable than a thousand men in the form of a new regiment, for the former, by association with good experienced captains, lieutenants, and non-commissioned officers, soon became veterans, whereas the latter were generally unavailable for a year.'[1]

The Southerners, on the other hand, early adopted the conscription; the superior officers were appointed by the Government, and the recruits sent to fill the vacancies in the ranks. The President was so strong in the unanimity of his people as to be free from the necessity of conciliating party supporters of the governors of individual States. Few 'political' regiments existed in the South; men commanded because they were competent to command, and not because they could influence votes.

Secondly, 'a great advantage in favour of the Confederate troops was their skill as marksmen. Accustomed as many of them were from their boyhood to shooting with ball bears, deer, and other game, their certainty of aim was acquired by instinct.'[2]

Lastly, as to discipline, whether we agree or not with Colonel Fletcher that the conditions of life in the South were the more favourable to military excellence, we cannot reject his conclusion that 'the rich planter possessing many slaves entirely dependent on him in regard to food, clothing, medicine, and discipline, acquired habits of command and organisation highly useful to the officers of an army.' Moreover, the population was as distinctly divided into classes as the subjects of a monarchy. The line of demarcation was strictly drawn and the social precedence of the old colonial families was undisputed. The Confederate States were free from the aggressive independence of the North. Obedience was a quality of which they had previous experience. Throughout their history their people had unreservedly committed their political destinies to

[1] *Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman*, vol. ii. p. 388.
[2] *Life in the Confederate Army*, by W. Watson, p. 230.

the members of their great houses, and they followed them now as loyally in the field. Unfortunately for their cause, neither statesman nor soldier was able to persuade them that, however strongly the presence of trusted leaders may assist discipline, it is devotion to duty alone that makes an army always formidable.

So far as history can tell us, no army, however high the standard of education, has become really efficient until obedience has become an instinct, and the presence in the ranks of men accustomed to think for themselves and to reason before acting, however weighty the authority which bids them act, renders the acquirement of such instinct a long process. When soldiers become once imbued with the habit of obedience, then doubtless the more intelligent will be the more useful; but enthusiasm and intelligence will not stand the stress of battle and the hardships of campaigning, unless their possessors have learnt to subordinate their reason and inclinations to their duty. It is open to those in whose ears the very name of discipline smacks of slavery to assert that a powerful instinct of obedience dwarfs the intellect, turns the man into a machine, and rusts his power of reasoning; and in this there is a shadow of truth, but it is only a shadow. If a soldier is never permitted to use his intelligence, never placed in a position of responsibility, allowed neither to act nor move except at the word of command, sooner or later he loses all power of initiative, and there are many occasions in the field where a man must be left to his own unaided judgment. But if the soldier's training is what it should be, his education for individual action will go hand in hand with his acquirement of the habit of self-effacement. It may be difficult to combine two such opposite characteristics, but it is not impossible. The officers of any regular army have the same instincts of obedience as their men, and yet their power of initiative, developed by responsibility, is seldom impaired; and again, the skirmishers of the Light Division, when they had learnt, on the outpost line of Wellington's army, to use their intelligence, and to act without a corporal at their elbow, proved themselves as skilful and as enterprising as the famous voltigeurs of France, and this without losing

their capacity for moving like a wall under heavy fire. It is important to be clear on this point, for it is unfortunately to be apprehended that few, except professional soldiers, understand the nature or the value of discipline. They were certainly not understood in America before the war. The sovereign people of the Northern States could create mighty armies, could equip those armies as none had ever been equipped before; but it could not create the discipline of habit —that was deemed unworthy of free men—and in its place relied on the discipline of reason and of patriotism.

From the pages of the Comte de Paris we may learn whether the American product was an efficient substitute for the mechanical subordination of regular troops. Speaking of the sluggishness with which operations were carried on in McClellan's Peninsular campaign, he writes as follows:

'This sluggishness is in a measure enforced on the generals by the nature of their troops. Those troops are brave, but the bonds of subordination are weak in the extreme. It follows, then, that there is no certainty that what has been commanded will be exactly executed. The will of the individual, capricious as popular majorities, plays far too large a part. The leader is obliged to turn round to see if he is being followed; he has not the assurance that his subordinates are bound to him by ties of discipline and of duty. Hence come hesitation and conditions unfavourable to daring enterprise.'[1]

Again: '. . . Open to impressions, as are all crowds, the men, accustomed to a complete independence of action, were brought to battle actuated by obedience more reasonable than passive, by a sentiment of duty to the State rather than by the instinct of the disciplined soldier, who forgets his own inclination and draws inspiration from that of his officers alone. So, despite their courage, time was necessary to teach them that on ground where the lines of battle were brought close together, it was almost always less dangerous to charge the enemy than to remain exposed to a decimating fire. In default of the mechanism which, in armies well organised, communicates to

[1] *Campagne du Potomac*, pp. 144–5.

every man controlling influences as rapidly as do the nerves in the human frame, there were constant failures to transform a first advantage into a decisive success. When certain death awaited the foremost, then it was easy to march slower than the rest—personal courage being by no means equal—it sufficed that only one should hesitate, or be permitted to hesitate with impunity, for that hesitation to become contagious; and so the brave soldier lost his *élan*, the most resolute officer his daring. . . .'[1]

I have already said that an ill-disciplined army lacks mobility. Marching, strange as it may appear to those who have never served with troops in the field or in protracted peace exercises, makes the greatest demands on the subordination of the men and the exertions of the officers. It is no light task to bring a battalion of a thousand bayonets intact on to the field of battle at the proper time. Something more than enthusiasm is required to enable a mass of men to overcome the difficulties of bad weather and bad roads, or the sufferings of fatigue and hunger.

That the American troops, when they entered on the Peninsular campaign, had improved in this respect on the holiday soldiers of Bull Run there is no reason to doubt; but it seems that the marching power of neither army was considerable. The slow progress often made during important operations may be in part attributed to the inexperience of the staff, and in part to Napoleon's 'fourth element,' mud; but we are, nevertheless, justified in believing that it was mainly due to the absence of order and regularity on the line of march. Writing of McClellan's advance, Colonel Fletcher states that 'the whole extent of the road for twelve miles from the scene of action to the lines round Yorktown was encumbered and blocked up by the advancing brigades. Artillery, cavalry, infantry, and baggage were intermingled in apparently inextricable confusion. The rain fell in torrents, the roads were deep in mud, and the men straggled, fell out, and halted without orders, so that the column of route of the Federals

[1] *Histoire de la Guerre Civile en Amérique*, vol. i. pp. 343–4.

resembled much more the line of retreat of a defeated than the advance of a successful army.'[1]

In the papers, not the least entertaining and graphic of the series, contributed to the 'Century' by a gentleman who served as a private in McClellan's army, we find the following:

'It was a bright day in April—a perfect Virginia day—the grass was green beneath our feet, the buds of the trees were just unrolling into leaves under the warming sun of spring, and in the woods the birds were singing. The march was at first orderly, but under the unaccustomed burden of heavy equipments and knapsacks, and the warmth of the weather, the men straggled along the roads, mingling with the baggage waggons, ambulances and pontoon trains in seeming [*sic*] confusion. . . . After leaving Big Bethel we began to feel the weight of our knapsacks. Castaway overcoats, blankets, parade coats, and shoes were scattered along the route in reckless profusion.'[2]

I have stated that the Southerners of the earlier years of the war proved themselves better soldiers than those who served the Union. Both sides showed themselves stubborn on the defensive, but nowhere did the Federals display the dash and energy which characterised the assaults of the Confederates during the 'Seven Days' Battles.' Nor was the superiority of the Southerners less marked upon the line of march. Lee's victories were due as much to sturdy limbs as to stout hearts. But the discipline of his troops was insufficient to prevent straggling. It has been recorded that nearly 20,000 men were absent from his ranks at the Antietam. A long series of hard marches and fiercely contested battles, deficiencies of supplies, the want of boots, and the indomitable spirit which induced many wounded and foot-sore men to report themselves as fit for duty when they were incapable of doing a long day's work, had, it is true, a share in creating the great gaps which existed in the muster rolls on the morning of the battle. But Lee's official reports leave no doubt whatever that indiscipline was the real cause of

[1] *History of the American War*, vol. i. p. 439.
[2] *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. ii. p. 191.

the undue weakness of the army. On September 7, ten days before the Antietam, he reported as follows to the President:

'One of the greatest evils, from which many minor ones proceed, is the habit of straggling from the ranks. It has become a habit difficult to correct. With some—the sick and feeble—it results from necessity, but with the greater number from design. The latter do not wish to be with their regiments, nor to share in their hardships and glories. They are the cowards of the army, desert their comrades in times of danger, and fill the homes of the charitable and hospitable on the march.'[1]

That this vice was by no means unknown even in Jackson's command, which accomplished such remarkable feats of marching as to earn for itself the name of 'foot cavalry,' we find convincing testimony. General Taylor, an old regular officer, was promoted early in the war to the command of a brigade, and was ordered to join Jackson on the Shenandoah.

'The end,' he writes of one of his first marches, 'drew heavily on the marching capacity, or rather incapacity, of the men. Straggling was then, and continued to be throughout, the vice of Southern armies . . . When brought into the field the men were as ignorant of the art of marching as babes, and required for their instruction the same patient, unwearied attention. On this and subsequent marches frequent halts were made, to enable stragglers to close up . . . The men appreciated care and attention, following advice as to the fitting of their shoes, cold bathing of feet, and healing of abrasions, and soon held it a disgrace to fall out of the ranks.'[2]

Within a month his brigade had acquired discipline and cohesion. When he first reported his arrival to Jackson the latter enquired the road and the distance marched that day. 'Keazletown road,' was the reply, 'six and twenty miles.' 'You seem to have no stragglers.' 'Never allow straggling.' 'You must teach my people; they straggle badly.'[3]

It is scarcely necessary to refer for confirmation of these statements to General Hazen's 'The School and the Army in

[1] *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee*, p. 522.
[2] *Destruction and Reconstruction*, pp. 36–7.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 56.

Germany'; but it is worthy of remark that this officer, who served with much distinction under Grant and Sherman and also accompanied Moltke to Versailles, whenever he discusses the relative merits of the Federal and the Prussian soldiery, never hesitates to acknowledge that the average mobility of the latter was by far the greater. That he is compelled to draw a comparison unfavourable to the American troops he attributes rather to the ignorance and indolence of their officers than to the indiscipline of the men; but it must not be forgotten that, at the outset of the war, inexperience and physical incapacity were equally destructive of cohesion. To take, for instance, the operations preceding Bull Run: The rank and file of McDowell's army were not all city-bred; many of the battalions were recruited from the lumbering and agricultural districts; many were in great part composed of men in good position and active habits; but want of practice in the mere mechanical action demanded by the orderly progression of a large body of troops neutralised their powers. Now, want of mobility, under any circumstances whatever, is a fatal fault.

In a country like our own, whose limits are small and where railways are as numerous and as closely connected as the threads of a spider's web, it might seem that no more is required than to bring the men up by train and to set them down behind lines of earthworks. But this is an idea which every practical soldier will scout as chimerical. The transit of great masses of troops by rail is, for short distances, less speedy than movement by road, even when everything has been prepared beforehand; the very existence of earthworks will cause the enemy to avoid them, to mask his intentions, and to concentrate his troops at some unexpected point. To meet him at that point the defenders must be capable of rapid and orderly movement. Troops that cannot march are but untrustworthy auxiliaries. They cannot be readily transferred to the threatened point. They cannot be relied upon to execute the counter-stroke, the soul of the defence, involving both expedition and endurance. It is useless to call upon them to pursue. And yet, in the face of this fact, marching has been suffered to become a lost art in England; and it is beyond question that, although the picked

contingents of volunteers which take part in the Easter manœuvres excite admiration by the precision of their movements, and by the ease with which they accomplish long distances in trying weather, there are many men in every regiment who, although manifestly unfit for the fatigues of service, are allowed, for want of a physical test, to take their places in the ranks, and are, therefore, absolute encumbrances to mobility. And these men, be it noted, in case of war would not have had the benefit of eight or ten weeks of camp life, as had the men who failed McDowell at Bull Run. How much the Germans in 1870 owed to their constant practice in marching, to their rigid rejection of weakly men, and their sound system of physical training, may be realised from the following instances: Within three weeks of mobilisation, 'the troops had already evinced great marching powers; thus the 5th Infantry Division, under a glaring sun and over unfavourable ground, had made marches of over fourteen miles on four consecutive days.'[1] On August 2, part of the 14th Infantry Division traversed twenty-seven miles. The 33rd Regiment, about the same period, completed in three days a march of sixty-nine miles over mountainous country. At the battle of Spicheren the advanced guard of the 13th Division, when it came into action against the left rear of the French, was twenty-five miles distant from its morning bivouac; and a battalion of the 53rd Regiment took but thirteen hours to cover the 27½ miles that separated it from the field. And be it remembered that in every one of these cases more than half of the men, drawn from the reserve, had only just rejoined the ranks.

A little later, after the battle of Gravelotte, but still only a month distant from the date of mobilisation, the six army corps which composed the armies of the Crown Princes of Prussia and of Saxony marched for nine days consecutively in their pursuit of MacMahon, in many instances traversing four-and-twenty miles a day. Stonewall Jackson's division, both in the Shenandoah Valley and in the campaign against Pope, often covered an even greater distance in a single day; but no large army in the first three years of the American War went near

[1] *Franco-German War*, 1870–1, part 1, vol. i. p. 111.

rivalling this continuous movement of 220,000 men, encumbered with a huge supply train—for the district was barren—and an enormous mass of artillery. That this gigantic effort stripped the Crown Prince of Saxony of one-third of his infantry we know on the authority of Prince Kraft von Hohenlohe.[1] But the missing men were to be found in ambulance and hospital. Stragglers, in the worst sense of the word, there were none. No abandoned knapsacks marked the route; and the absence of all irregularity on the line of march is constantly remarked by those who witnessed the campaigns in France. Every man who was physically fit answered to his name at the evening bivouac. Every man who could carry his rifle was found in his place when the battle opened. Had an American army of '61 or '62 been opposed by one of the same strength disciplined on the German pattern, a few rough marches would have produced an inequality in numbers greatly in favour of the latter.

In the war of 1870–1, the outpost service of the German armies was carried to a perfection which is, perhaps, without parallel in history. In exceedingly few instances were even the smallest detachments surprised; and during the tedious investments of Metz and Paris, ample notice was received of every threatening movement. The standard of discipline and efficiency attained by the German army is that which every European army is now striving to reach, and it is by that standard that the volunteers of America must be judged. I have already shown that they fell far short of German perfection in the matter of marching; and I may now be permitted to add that their enthusiasm and patriotism were by no means proof against the exacting duties of the outposts. Surprises were frequent throughout the war. More than one of the great battles was ushered in by a sudden rush on troops asleep in their tents or in the act of cooking. Many were the instances where the enemy was able to mass almost within rifle shot of the sentries without exciting suspicion of his presence. Little less numerous are the occasions when, of two armies in close proximity, the one withdrew during the night without the other having the slightest knowledge that such a movement was in progress.

[1] *Strategische Briefe*, vol. ii. p. 230.

It is true that the dense forests which covered the theatre of war were favourable to every kind of secret operation. But the war of 1870 was waged in part in thickly-wooded districts, and there we find not only that the Germans were secure from attack, but, no matter how great the exhaustion of the troops or the danger of the undertaking, that information of the enemy's movements and dispositions was always forthcoming. Every subaltern in charge of a piquet knew his duty. After a forced march or a hard day's fighting no relaxation was allowed. Before the fires of the bivouac were lighted, scouts were moving far to the front. Through the night watches every road and path was traversed at short intervals by patrols; and the earliest light saw stronger parties pushing forward towards the enemy's lines. Had the officers been always as diligent, had the men been sufficiently disciplined to face the fatigues of this arduous service, the American armies would also have been free from the reproach of negligence and surprise.

It is not sufficient for the security of an army that the majority do their duty, as doubtless did the majority of both Federals and Confederates. The carelessness of a few may give the enemy his opportunity. It was the absolute uniformity with which duty was done in the German army that made it so formidable an adversary and so excellent a model.

As to the discipline of the American troops in camp and quarters, in some respects it was decidedly good. Drunkenness was almost unknown, for the men acquiesced without complaint in the orders which forbade the introduction of intoxicating liquors within their lines. Nor was insubordination in the active sense a prevalent crime. But of passive disobedience there was much. The men, in the early days more especially, were accustomed to yield only such obedience as they considered necessary. The officers dared demand no more, and an appeal to the intelligence of the battalions was a far more effective means of rousing them to action than a mere command. At the same time, leaders conspicuous for skill and valour soon won the confidence of the troops, and then their task became an easier one. The soldiers followed the man they trusted without hesitation, and endured the privations he imposed without a

murmur. So far their good sense served them; but it did not teach them that instant obedience to orders, no matter by whom they are given or how injudicious they may seem, is more valuable than the obedience which is merely a tribute to superior ability.

'No man but the commander can judge of what is important and what is not. . . . Soldiers must therefore obey in all things. They may, and do, laugh at foolish orders, but they nevertheless obey, not because they are blindly obedient, but because they know that to disobey is to break the backbone of their profession.' [1]

It is thus that individual intelligence is best exercised; in realising and maintaining the important truth that prompt and entire obedience, mechanical if you will, but none the less powerful, is the mainspring of success.

That the intelligence and patriotism of the American soldiers were not sufficient to keep them in the ranks upon the line of march I have said enough to prove; but in yet another respect these qualities, unbacked by discipline, were found wanting. In the supreme moment, in the hour of battle, when it required no greater acumen than is possessed by the most ignorant of ploughboys to comprehend that every rifle was needed at the front, numbers, that in some cases exceeded those of a strong division, were found hastening to the rear. At Seven Pines, McClellan states that when Hooker brought up his division about dark he had been delayed 'by the throng of fugitives, through whom the colonel of the leading regiment had to force his way with the bayonet.' [2] At the Antietam, three months later, two Federal army corps, roughly handled in their attack on Lee's left, almost entirely dissolved; and it was reported on the following day that the reduction in one of them was not due only to the casualties of battle, but that a considerable number had withdrawn from the ranks, 'some having dropped out on the march, many dispersing and leaving during the battle.' [3]

Again, at Shiloh, in the spring of 1862, General Buell,

[1] *Remarks on Military Law*, by Sir Charles Napier, p. 13.
[2] McClellan's Report, pp. 224–5. [3] *Ibid.* p. 401.

coming up to reinforce Grant, who had been surprised and driven back after a desperate resistance, found a crowd of soldiers, which he estimated at near 15,000 men, about one-third of the whole force, cowering under shelter of the river bluffs. And a careful perusal of the numerous narratives of survivors of the battle reveals that unwillingness to remain under fire was no less conspicuous amongst the Confederates.

However sound the discipline, however efficient the police, there are men in every army whom no earthly consideration—neither habit, nor honour, nor fear of punishment or disgrace—will induce to face death and danger on a hardly-contested field. Long before La Haye Sainte had been carried, and while as yet Napoleon's massive columns had been everywhere beaten back, men galloped through the streets of Brussels crying that all was lost. Craufurd's Light Division, making its famous march to Talavera, met 'crowds of runaways; not all Spaniards'[1] significantly adds the great historian. And when on August 18, 1870, the First German army reeled back in confusion from Frossard's impregnable position, it required the presence of the King himself to arrest the flight of the panic-stricken mob in Gravelotte village.

At the same time, I cannot recall a single incident from the history of any disciplined army to show that leaving the colours, before the battle was decided, has ever occurred on the same wholesale scale as in many of the great engagements of the American war. Even the insubordinate French regulars of 1870, straggle as they might on the line of march, held staunchly to the eagles in the hour of combat. To find a parallel to the Antietam or to Shiloh we must turn to the operations of Gambetta'a levies on the Loire, where whole regiments of cavalry were posted in rear of the line of battle to drive back the fugitives and drive on the laggards.

But there was still another manner in which the vice of insubordination showed itself, a manner characteristic of armies in which the bonds of discipline are frail, and more fruitful of disastrous consequences than the hesitation or misconduct of the soldiery. Insubordination is the most contagious of moral

[1] Napier's *History of the War in the Peninsula*, vol. ii. p. 178.

diseases. Let it burst out amongst the lowest, and, if it be not instantly crushed, its poisonous breath will infect the highest. It is no respecter of persons. If the supreme authorities wink at its existence amongst the rank and file, officers even of superior rank will become contaminated. Let men become once accustomed to overlook remissness, and their own respect for discipline relaxes. So it was in France previous to the downfall of the last Napoleon. In 1859 the army had shown symptoms of insubordination. At Solferino the cry had been heard, 'Les épaulettes en avant!'; and when, in July 1870, the Emperor set out on his last campaign, there were those amongst his most trusted subordinates who had lost all sense of duty. Distrust and jealousy reigned in the highest places. *Camaraderie* was a forgotten word; and the absence of concert, the neglect of the most ordinary precautions, and the indifference of the generals to the action or requirements of their colleagues point to indiscipline of the most pernicious kind.

The great fault of the American soldier in the early part of the war was that the obedience he rendered was based on intelligence rather than on habit. He did not resist authority when he considered its demands were reasonable, but when he thought those demands vexatious or unnecessary he remembered his birthright as the citizen of a free State, and refused compliance. This vice spread upwards. As the soldiery followed with reluctance an untried or unpopular leader, as they did not deem it incumbent on them to obey an officer merely because he was their military superior, so the generals, even those next in rank to the commander-in-chief, were not at all times to be relied upon to render cheerful obedience.

'The success of our army [of the Potomac] was undoubtedly greatly lessened by jealousy, distrust, and general want of the *entente cordiale*.'[1]

Even the influence of Lee, trusted and beloved as he was by his veterans, was insufficient to ensure at all times unhesitating compliance with his orders. Jackson, indeed, declared that he would follow him blindfold. But Jackson's conception of duty was not shared by all. Still, the great Virginian captain had

[1] *The Antietam and Fredericksburg*, General Palfrey, p. 59.

rarely to complain of disobedience or lukewarmness. Nor did McClellan, Jackson, or Grant, when once they had established their reputation, find it difficult to exact submission from their subordinates. But far otherwise was it with those in whom their lieutenants had little confidence, who, like Pope and Burnside, were suddenly raised by the caprice of the President above their fellows, or, like Bragg and Halleck, lacked both tact and fortune. To remain loyal to such men was a severe test, and the discipline of many of their officers lost its hold. It is hardly necessary to comment on the extraordinary means adopted by the Federal Government to ascertain the fitness of the military chiefs, the Congressional Committee on the war, before which subordinate generals were examined as to the conduct of their commander, and encouraged to express their opinions on his ability, his strategy and his tactics, with all the freedom that envy could suggest. The 'Century' papers teem with instances of disobedience, of argument, and of hostile criticism on plans of battle; and the reader of such campaigns as that of Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, and Murfreesboro' can realise for himself the disastrous results of such breaches of discipline in the higher ranks.

I have written at some length on this question, and for this reason, that, notwithstanding the increased knowledge of war and its requirements, it appears probable that in the future the canker of insubordination is likely to manifest its presence in this form. The spirit of indiscipline is abroad; not only the indiscipline that is bred of self-seeking, envy, or disappointed vanity, but indiscipline conscientiously advocated as the rule of life and morals. 'To render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's' is a precept, we are told, that has lost its application. There are those who are unpractical enough to believe with Plato that obedience is of value only when based on reason, and to assert that no man need obey a law the enactment of which has not received his individual sanction. However hurtful to the State, such opinions are a hundredfold more dangerous to the army. Without absolute obedience to the spirit as well as to the letter of the law; without a determination on the part of all to render loyal service and

cordial support to every authority, however distasteful such a course may be; without the resolution to forego and to check criticism of the acts of superiors, skill and courage are of no avail. A great military writer has recorded in the pages of the 'Edinburgh Review' that, notwithstanding their vast superiority in numbers, wealth, and armament, the twenty millions who upheld the Union were powerless to crush five millions of Secessionists until they had introduced into their armies a sterner discipline. Intelligence and enthusiasm had their trial. For three long years the infatuation of the Northern people in favour of individual freedom lasted, and during those three years the national cause made little progress. At length the scales dropped from the eyes of the Government and the troops. A leader was chosen who throughout his military career had been constant in obedience, chary of criticism, and patient under misconception; but unsparing of condemnation when it was deserved, and impatient of insubordination in his lieutenants.

Under Grant, backed by the unreserved support of Lincoln, whose conversion to the new doctrine of unhesitating obedience was whole-hearted, the army of the Potomac entered on a new phase of existence and of efficiency. On one occasion only—at the second battle of Cold Harbor, where, after having already lost more than 40,000 men in less than three weeks, the Federal troops were ordered to renew an assault on an entrenched position which had already cost more than 10,000 men—did either officers or men venture to dispute the judgment of the general-in-chief.

Relying on the discipline no less than on the courage of his lieutenants and his soldiery, Grant was able to carry out his policy of wearing out his opponent by incessant attack. The army of the Potomac was employed as if it was a battering-ram, without consciousness and without feeling. It was a machine, perhaps unskilfully used, but challenging admiration by the manner in which it answered every touch of the manipulator. The lesson had taken long to learn, but it was thoroughly mastered. Brigadiers and colonels forbore to obtrude their advice upon the general commanding. Divisional leaders no longer asked audience of the President to expose the errors of

their superior. No leader of an army corps criticised adversely the plan of battle in the hearing of his troops, as Hooker had done before Fredericksburg. The necessity of co-operation and ready support had become apparent; and the truth was at last recognised that even indifferent tactics have a better chance of success, where those who carry them out are in accord, than more skilful strokes if cordial acquiescence in their expediency is wanting. Those who had held high rank in the regular army obeyed, without a sign of mortification, men who had been their juniors in the old service, who had retired after a few years, had been again brought in from civil life, and were now promoted above their heads. The commander-in-chief had no longer occasion to complain, with Marshal Junot in Portugal, that what he wanted was inferior officers who would obey him, and not comrades who thought themselves as good as he was. That knowledge had come to all which at first had seemed the possession of the few, that absolute devotion to duty is a more substantial good than brilliant exploits in the field, and a more enduring glory than the applause of press and populace.

As to the discipline of the troops on the field of battle, I have already quoted the Comte de Paris's statement that, on the part of the Federal troops, there was a decided disinclination to decide the combat with the bayonet. Over and over again, in the pages of the 'Century' volumes, instances can be found of the line of battle approaching within a hundred, and in some cases within even fifty, paces of the enemy, and there stopping short, not, however, preparatory to retreat, but to seeking cover, and maintaining a fire fight more fruitful in casualties to itself than a determined advance.

That the battalions were capable of maintaining their position under such circumstances is in itself a proof of fine courage. The Germans impress on their infantry the maxim that, when such close quarters are reached, 'if you don't go away the enemy will'; but here were soldiers who refused to move, and who could be depended on to hold out to the last extremity. The Confederates, on the other hand, successful in so many offensive battles, were manifestly capable of the supreme effort necessary to cross the narrow intervening space between the

lines, to carry out decisive assaults, and to pierce their adversaries' front.

Mutual confidence is the force that drives a charge home; and this quality is the fruit of discipline alone, for in almost every campaign it is the better-disciplined troops who have displayed the greatest vigour in assault. In the war of 1870 the *furia Francese* appears to have passed over to the men of Brandenburg and Bavaria, and in place of the impetuous advance of the long lines of bayonets which made the battle of Napoleon like 'the swell and dash of a mighty wave,' were the isolated counter-strokes of a few brave men whose daring but served to accentuate the irresolution of the mass. Very early in the War of Secession, the Federal commanders, recognising their enemy's disposition to bring matters to a speedy issue, made use of earthworks and entrenchments; the Confederates, at a later period, when the desperate assaults on the Fredericksburg heights taught them that the Northern battalions had at length learnt to follow their officers to certain death, gave up their trust in broken ground and sheltering coverts, and adopted the same means of stiffening the defence.

In 1863, the third year of the war, both armies became equally formidable on the defensive, and—we have it on the authority of officers who took part in the campaigns—the confusion of the earlier fields of battle was no longer seen. After a charge or a repulse the troops rallied quickly to their colours; there was little intermixture of units; and constant practice on the drill-ground enabled the battalions to reform after a hot fight in an exceedingly short time, to take up the pursuit without delay, or to oppose a counter-stroke with unbroken front. Fire discipline, on the other hand, did not exist. Occasionally, when protected by unusually strong defences, the leaders were able to induce their men to reserve their fire to close range, but, as a general rule, whether defending or attacking, the men used their rifles at will.

'The officers were never sufficiently masters of their soldiers to prevent them, when bullets were whistling past, from immediately answering the enemy's fire. In the best Confederate regiments, in the midst of a conflict, the ardent and burning

inclination of the soldiers was obeyed rather than the commands of the officers.'[1]

That the fire of infantry should be under the same control as that of artillery is now recognised as the most vital principle of battle tactics; and it is instructive to note that the American volunteers were incapable, at any period of the war, of answering the very trifling demands made by the discipline of an age which rated fire of less value than the bayonet. The official reports of Gettysburg are significant. Amongst 24,000 loaded rifles picked up on the field only a quarter were properly loaded; 12,000 contained two charges each (both sides were armed with muzzle-loaders) and the other quarter from three to ten.

It has been stated by Lord Wolseley, speaking with the authority of one who is an earnest student of Lee's campaign, and who accompanied the Confederate army in the operations succeeding the Antietam, that at any time during the war a single army corps of regular troops would have turned the scale in favour of either side.[2] This assertion, as I understand it, implies a conviction that 30,000 regulars would, by their superior mobility and cohesion, have given the leader who controlled them the power of assembling superior numbers at the decisive point; in fact—and their own commanders were fully conscious that such was the case—that even at a late period of the war the armies lacked the attributes of regular organisations. Now, the military experience of the combatants was large, their goodwill remarkable; the military code existed in full force, and officers of proved capacity had little difficulty in securing prompt obedience. How was it, then, that not until the war was drawing to a close did discipline become firmly established, and mobility and cohesion characteristic of the troops? The answer is not far to seek. Both Lord Wolseley and Colonel Fletcher have alluded to the extraordinary difficulties thrown in the path of the commanders by the inefficiency of the regimental officers and the staff, but I prefer to appeal to evidence more direct.

[1] *Life of General Lee*, by C. Lee Childe, p. 46.
[2] *Macmillan's Magazine*, vol. lv. p. 328.

'The great difficulty, I find,' wrote Lee to the Confederate President in March 1863, 'is in causing orders and regulations to be obeyed. This arises not from a spirit of disobedience, but from ignorance. We have therefore need of a corps of officers to teach others their duty, see to the observance of orders and to the regularity and precision of all movements. This is accomplished in the French service by their staff corps.' Enumerating then the various appointments necessary, he adds, 'If you can fill these positions with proper officers . . . you might hope to have the finest army in the world.' [1]

'When I compare the 41st Ohio,' says General Hazen, 'with other regiments which worried the patience by their snail-like and uncertain movements, I am strongly impressed with the immense loss which our country sustained in consequence of the indolence, ignorance, and shiftlessness of its officers.' [2]

One of the first acts of McClellan, on assuming command of the Union forces in 1861, and also of Grant, on his promotion to the same office in 1864, was to weed the commissioned ranks; the first by a system of examination, the second by the unsparing exercise of his powers as commander-in-chief. During the régime of those able administrators several hundred officers were dismissed the service. These facts speak for themselves. There is no need to produce further testimony. At the beginning of the war, in both the Federal and the Confederate armies, well-trained officers, staff and regimental, were largely wanting. There were few who understood the careful preparations necessary for manœuvre and movement, few who could enforce the discipline or carry out the details essential to their execution. At a later period many had been suffered to fill the frequent vacancies who had, no doubt, a large acquaintance with warfare, acquired in the ranks, but had not received the training necessary for those who aspire to command. As regards the staff, the number of officers in the regular army of the United States, including those who had retired, did not exceed 2,000; of these, many on the Northern side remained with their own regiments; on both sides many were detailed to

[1] *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee*, p. 619.

[2] *The School and the Army in Germany*, p. 221.

command the larger units. Of those who remained available for staff duties few had received special training, and it was some time before they became fitted for their onerous positions. At the outset, the sovereign people, deeming a staff but an ornamental appendage, objected to its formation. McDowell was accompanied by only two aides-de-camp at Bull Run; and when the scanty number employed was at length allowed to be recruited from the volunteers, the majority had yet to learn the very rudiments of their business. And so, throughout the earlier campaigns, the generals were compelled to work single-handed. They were without 'the hundred voices,' the 'hundred eyes,' the 'hundred ears' which alone make possible the skilful direction of the movements of large armies. They had no means of knowing that their orders had been executed as they wished, or even executed at all. They had no assistance in framing the multifarious instructions which the troops required. The thousand details which must be attended to during every hour of a campaign, if not supervised by the general himself, were altogether neglected.

Those familiar with the campaigns of 1866 and 1870 know how deeply the principle of co-operation has penetrated the spirit of German generalship, with what extraordinary effect it was put into practice, and how the lucidity of the orders issued by the various headquarters simplified its application. But both in Lee's and McClellan's armies the means of ensuring concerted action were defective, and lack of combination was consequently the great tactical fault of almost every battle. The commanders were without the slightest practical experience of the movements of great masses of troops, such as is imparted to the officers of Continental armies in the autumn manœuvres. Their military life had been passed in the scattered forts along the Indian frontier, where, like General Ewell, a Confederate brigadier at Bull Run and an officer of nearly twenty years service, they 'had learned all about commanding fifty United States dragoons and had forgotten everything else.'[1]

When we read the orders issued by the Confederate headquarters for the assault of the formidable position of Malvern

[1] *Destruction and Reconstruction*, p. 38.

Hil we cease to wonder at the failure to arrest the Federal retre t from the Chickahominy to the James. The staff who consic ered the following production sufficient to ensure a combi ed attack in a wooded country must have been utterly incapable of directing the intricate movements devised by Lee to ensnare McClellan:

'Batteries have been established to act upon the enemy's line. If it is broken, as is probable, Armistead, who can witness the effect of the fire, has been ordered to charge with a yell. Do the same.'[1]

Unfortunately the enemy's line was not broken. Armistead's division did not charge. But three of his regiments became involved in action, and, so far as I can ascertain, their shouts were construed as the signal. Two divisions attacked at different times. They were unsupported, and lost 5,000 men without shaking the enemy's hold on his position. It may be admitted that co-operation when in contact with the enemy is no easy matter to bring about, especially in a country covered by swamp and forest. There are, however, three means of overcoming the difficulty: the first, constant communication between the units; the second, thorough reconnaissance of the ground over which movements are to be made; the third, clear and well-considered orders. Now in both the Federal and Confederate armies of 1862 these three points, as a general rule, were disregarded. The staff was possibly too small to attend to the first, too inexperienced to carry out the second, and insufficiently trained to produce the third. When time is pressing and quick decision essential, when an infinite variety of details has to be considered and provision made for numerous contingencies, the framing of orders is a task that demands not only a wide acquaintance with war, but constant practice. It constitutes a special branch in the education of the general staff, and should find a prominent place in the training of all officers, for the power of explaining his intentions so that none can fail to comprehend is as necessary to the subaltern in charge of a patrol as to the leader of an army corps.

[1] *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. ii. p. 392.

Several of the most important battles of the Secession War would, in all probability, have assumed a different aspect had not 'misunderstanding of orders'—a phrase with which the reader of the 'Century' papers soon finds himself familiar, and which is in itself a proof of an ill-trained staff—so frequently occurred. Nor can we fail to remark the inability of even the supreme commanders to inform themselves of the situation of affairs at the front or on the wings. This arose from the fact that 'the general staff did not and could not assist the commander as he should have been assisted. . . . There was not a large personal staff of experienced and talented officers, capable of keeping the general fully informed of the operations of his corps.'[1] The battle of Williamsburg, fought in May 1862, began at seven in the morning. Although he had sent aides-de-camp to the front for the express purpose of reporting, it was one o'clock before McClellan was made aware that his troops were in contact with the enemy. At Seven Pines, June 30, 1862, Johnston, the Confederate leader, remained for several hours in ignorance that a division had taken the wrong road, and that the attack he had ordered had not been made. At Gettysburg, in July 1863, as will be seen later, exactly the same error occurred. With every allowance for the close and wooded nature of the country, such a state of things is as inconceivable in an army possessing a well-trained staff as the fact that, although Jackson's flank movement round Pope, in August 1862, was seen and reported by the Federal signallers, not a single cavalry regiment, nor even a single scout, was sent out to ascertain the direction of his march; or that Longstreet's division at Seven Pines, ordered to begin the attack, should have crossed a stream by an improvised bridge in single file, when, in the words of one of his brigadiers: 'if the division commander had given orders for the men to sling their cartridge boxes, haversacks, &c., on their muskets and wade without breaking formation, they could have crossed by fours at least, with water up to their waists, . . . and hours would have been saved.'[2]

[1] *The Peninsula*, General Webb, p. 183.

[2] *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. ii. p. 229.

Lack of reconnaissance was a fruitful source of indecisive successes and of unnecessary loss. Movements were projected and carried out without previous exploration of the ground or selection of the most effective line of advance. Little care was taken to discover the weak points of the enemy's position. The influence of topography upon tactics was unappreciated and the Confederate divisions attacked exactly where the adversary vished them to attack, instead of being directed by staff officers who, riding with the advanced scouts, had already made themselves acquainted with the ground, to the approaches most favourable to the assailant. We may also notice, that, owing to the simple expedient of placing finger-posts at cross-roads, or leaving an orderly to point out the route, being neglected, on several occasions—amongst others at Cold Harbor, South Mountain, and Gettysburg—the Confederate brigades came into action either at wide intervals from the rest of their division, or when the opportunity had passed, or in some cases, not at all.

During the strategic movements designed to bring an army to such a position and in such formation that it can readily exert its whole strength against the enemy, the duties of the staff are no less important than on the field or action. Few but those who have witnessed or studied the operations of large masses of troops can realise the nice arrangements, the constant supervision, the tact, training, and experience necessary to the successive execution of such movements. For all these operations the intervention of the staff is needed, but chaos and confusion are likely to ensue if the officers composing it are but novices.

In more than one respect the Confederate staff was superior to that of the Union army. The intelligence department was exceedingly well organised. The hunters of the South took kindly to scouting and patrol; and the certainty with which, in the dense Virginian woodlands, the Confederate generals received early warning of their enemy's every movement is proof of the priceless service that may be rendered by bold and enterprising horsemen working in their own country. To train volunteer cavalry to move in mass with the speed, the

unity, and the precision essential to effective action in the shock of battle is impossible, but the audacity of the Southern troopers, their adventurous and at the same time useful rides within the enemy's outposts, indicate that such troops can still fill an important rôle, especially in a close country, where individual daring and intelligence, as well as superior horsemanship, have free play.

Again, in the earlier campaigns the Confederates were the better marchers. Jackson, in the movement round Pope's right in August 1862, traversed fifty-six miles in two days; Longstreet was little less expeditious. And although the Southern army was unencumbered by the same superfluity of baggage and supplies as the Federal—the troops depending for subsistence on the fields of Indian corn or apple-orchards through which they passed, and the train consisting of a few ambulances and the ammunition carts—for this rapid advance due credit must be given to the staff. At the same time, as regards combinations for battle, the reconnaissance and mapping of the country over which the army was to move, the supply of guides capable of directing the divisions through the swamps and forests—and this in the midst of a friendly population—the arrangements were deplorably deficient.

General Lee's letter, already quoted, conclusively proves that in 1863, two years after the outbreak of the war, the staff had still much to learn. His suggestions for its improvement were, however, unheeded—they were perhaps impracticable, for staff officers cannot be made in a month or two—and Gettysburg was the result. The greatest conflict of the war was the most prolific of blunders. The story of the second of the three days' battle presents a picture of mismanagement that is almost without parallel. On the second day Longstreet, commanding the Confederate right wing, had been ordered to attack at an early hour. The famous position was as yet but thinly occupied, and Lee hoped to crush his enemy in detail.

'At 9 o'clock the general had been expecting to hear of the opening of the attack on the right, and was by no means satisfied with the delay. . . . About 10 A.M. . . . he

received a message that Longstreet was advancing. This appeared to relieve his anxiety, and he proceeded to the point where he expected the arrival of the corps. Here he waited for some time, during which interval he observed that the enemy had occupied the peach orchard which formed a portion of the ground that was to have been occupied by Longstreet . . . . On perceiving this he again expressed his impatience, and renewed his search for Longstreet. It was now about 1 o'clock P.M. After going some distance to the rear he discovered Hood's division (of Longstreet's corps) at a halt, while McLaws' division was yet at some distance on the Fairfield road, having taken a wrong direction. Longstreet was present, and, with General Lee, exerted himself to correct the error, but before the corps could be brought into its designated position it was 4 o'clock. . . . The opportunity which the early morning had presented was lost. The entire army of the Potomac was before us!'[1]

Moreover, the fighting which ensued showed that the mechanism for securing co-operation was still deficient. 'The whole affair,' writes Lee's adjutant-general, 'was disjointed. There was an utter absence of accord in the movements of the several commands.'[2] Now, we are all well aware that the difficulties in the way of a double attack are very great. As at Gettysburg, the failure of one wing or the other to move out at the appointed time may be due to the action of its immediate commander; and there are those who will argue that want of co-operation should be charged to the general rather than to the staff. It is true that in the campaigns of 1866 and 1870, notwithstanding the excellence of the Prussian staff, isolated attacks were by no means unfrequent. But there is absolutely no reason why, if the advance of one column is unavoidably delayed, the circumstance should not be immediately reported to the other; and it is the fact that the isolated attacks at Spicheren, Woerth, and Gravelotte were, in every instance, initiated by generals who had full knowledge of the situation, and assumed the sole responsibility of advancing without support. There was no failure of co-operation, for it was

[1] *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee*, pp. 281–2. [2] *Ibid.* p. 286.

deliberately rejected. In the American battles, on the other hand, the generals who sent their troops forward to what seems wanton destruction did so in expectation of support, and in ignorance that support had become impracticable. This ignorance was due to the want of communication between the different units; and the establishment and maintenance of such communication are the duty of the staff. Whilst the American offensive, therefore, during the first phase of the war, was a series of spasmodic efforts, the German offensive of 1866 and 1870 resembles nothing so much as the resistless sweep of a flowing tide, wave after wave hurrying from beyond the far horizon to break in close succession on the shore; and the singleness of purpose, the untiring energy, which were then displayed were due to the training of Moltke's pupils, the officers of the general staff. Never was Napoleon's golden rule, 'marcher au canon,' more zealously obeyed. Superficial students have indeed pointed out that to construe the words of the great soldier so literally as did the Germans is fraught with danger; but they have failed to discern that when the Germans adopted this principle they took care to provide a means of applying it without risk. They understood Napoleon better than their critics. They were well aware that their ancient enemy advocated no blind and reckless rush to the first sound of conflict, but that he held it a matter of course that every general, whether of army corps, division, or brigade, kept himself by means of his staff officers informed of the situation at the front, and was thus able to fix the exact point where his presence was most needed. The staff recognised this linking together of the various units to be among the most important of their duties; it had become a matter of routine at the annual manœuvres and peace exercises; and if the rashness or the ambition of the subordinate leaders sometimes led to irregularity, still the means of assuring co-operation, so deficient at Gettysburg, were always there; and, save when they were wilfully neglected, never failed to bring about the unity of action so essential to success.

I have often thought that the night marches of both Confederates and Federals through the tangled thickets and

over the indifferent roads of the Virginian wilderness in May 1864, as well as the ease with which the troops were handled in the many terrible battles that those marches led to, are remarkable instances of the way in which all obstacles disappear before the skill of an experienced staff. There can be no question that the future historian of the war will find little to criticise as regards the interior control of either army in the later campaigns. But, to show the necessity of the members of the general staff being trained to an average pitch of efficiency, I will refer to the last effort of Lee's heroic army to prolong the struggle. After resisting for nearly nine months, with much inferior forces, every effort of the Union commander to breach the long lines of earthworks which covered Petersburg and Richmond, the Confederates, on April 2, 1865, were compelled to abandon their defences. It was still possible to save the army by a movement past the enemy's front, and Lee was able to gain some hours' start. Grant followed quickly, hoping to intercept him. The Confederates were well-nigh starving, and 'Lee pressed on as rapidly as possible to Amelia Court House, where he ordered supplies to be deposited for the use of his troops on their arrival. This forethought was highly necessary, in consequence of the scanty supply of rations provided at the commencement of the retreat. The hope of finding a supply of food at this point, which had done much to buoy up the spirits of the men, was destined to be cruelly dispelled. Through an unfortunate error or misapprehension of orders the provision train had been taken on to Richmond, without unloading its stores at Amelia Court House. . . . Not a single ration was found to be provided for the hungry troops.'[1] Some one had blundered, and the result was the dispersion of a great part of the army and the subsequent surrender of the rest.

The question of the general staff is one of special importance to States who depend for their defence on an army which is not permanently organised for war. It may be possible to assemble armed men in vast numbers, and, if precise arrangements have previously been made, even to concentrate them at a given rendezvous; but to give them mobility—that

[1] *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee*, p. 412.

is, the capacity for moving in full strength and speedily to any quarter of the theatre of war—to enable each unit to take its part in battle, and to secure the co-operation of the whole, a large contingent of specially trained officers is absolutely necessary. Regimental officers, however efficient in their own line, however familiar with war, are necessarily ignorant of the duties of the staff. I would draw attention to the fact that, notwithstanding the existence of the regular army as a source of supply, two years of actual service had elapsed before either the Confederate or Federal staff could be classed as trustworthy, and I would remind my readers that the German staff owes its perfection not only to a long course of theoretical education under the best soldiers of the day, but to the practical experience of the movements of great masses of troops, acquired at the annual manœuvres.

I have already pointed out that national characteristics opposed great obstacles to the acquirement of discipline by the American troops; and I may be told that these characteristics being peculiar to America, the lessons of the war do not apply to our own volunteers. But I have also pointed out, and have produced unanswerable testimony in support, that the indiscipline which was the primary cause of the comparative inefficiency of the American armies was mainly due to the shortcomings of the regimental officers.

'The men,' says General Palfrey, 'were such soldiers as their officers made them.'[1] Whilst I am ready, therefore, to admit that on this side of the Atlantic indiscipline would find less genial soil, I cannot blink the fact that here, too, the means of checking its growth is wanting.

I do not wish to imply that, had the American officers been well trained, the troops they commanded would have at once assumed the bearing of veterans. To impart to men unbroken to restraint the instinctive subordination which is the life-blood of armies is the work of time, however efficient the officers; but, as we have seen, with intelligent men, confidence in the ability of their leaders supplies the place of mechanical discipline

[1] *The Antietam and Fredericksburg*, p. 185.

with extraordinary effect. And even if it be asserted that the individual intelligence and patriotism of our volunteers are sufficient of themselves to prevent the recurrence of the faults and disorders of the Americans, it is not difficult to show that their officers must needs be thoroughly competent. In the Secession War nothing more than discipline was required to give either belligerent an easy triumph. The leading on both sides being equal, the side which possessed the greater mobility and cohesion would have won by weight of numbers at the decisive point. Now the volunteer officers of England and her colonies have a task five-hundredfold more difficult than had Confederate or Federal. To create and to maintain discipline is not in itself sufficient. Their fellow-citizens demand of them that they should be capable of opposing with hope of success, not unprofessional soldiers, but armies led by officers, both staff and regimental, trained to that perfection of efficiency which Prussia was the first to establish and the first to profit by. By those who understand war in the new aspect given to it by German thoroughness the old idea that a man of ordinary courage, intelligence, and activity needed but the habit of command and an acquaintance with drill to make an excellent officer, has long since been repudiated. To lead men in battle is a profession demanding careful education and thorough training. That the country at large is very far from realising this truth is evident from the reluctance of Parliament to vote the sum necessary for even the most limited field manœuvres, although in the opinion of every professional soldier, without exception, these practical exercises are the only means of educating its officers. But if our professional soldiers at home lack the opportunities of learning their work that are afforded to the soldiers of every Continental nation, however poor, the volunteers are in still more evil case. Brigade camps, Easter manœuvres, and schools of instruction are certainly, so far as they go, valuable means of education; but the five or six days, at most, of practical instruction in the business of a campaign afforded are a very poor substitute for the sixty or eighty days devoted annually in every battalion of the French and German armies to tactical exercises. It may, however, be argued that, by passing a

professional examination, volunteer officers prove themselves at least sufficiently well trained to secure the confidence, and thus to establish the discipline, of those they command. Of examinations in military subjects I am no blind admirer; they are by no means fair tests of comparative efficiency.

But I acknowledge that examinations are necessary. If the study which they impose does not always lead a man to think, it at least gives or revives a knowledge of useful details. More than all, the attainment of the required standard proves earnestness, and earnestness goes a long way towards winning the confidence of others. Now, the examinations which volunteer officers are called upon to pass before promotion are of so perfunctory a nature, and the standard to be attained is so very low, that they neither compel reflection nor teach details; and so small is the modicum of study and practice they demand that even the most indolent and indifferent are not deterred from facing the ordeal. The examination in tactics is a severer test, a tax on leisure and on application; but it is noteworthy that by no means a large proportion avail themselves of the opportunity of learning something of the science of fighting, and of earning an increased pecuniary grant for their corps. The truth is—and it is time that it was fairly faced—that the weak point of the volunteer forces is the dearth of well-trained officers. No practical soldier who has experience of our citizen troops, either at home or in the colonies, will be found to deny that these troops suffer from the same deficiency which, in their earlier campaigns, rendered the American armies, brave and intelligent as they were, inferior to the European armies of to-day. Yet I am far from believing that the possible efficiency of the volunteer force has been exhausted. On the contrary, I am firmly convinced that, if a higher standard of military training were exacted, a large proportion of both officers and men would welcome its introduction. It is possible that increased demands would thin the ranks; but, even if their numbers were reduced by a third, with a corresponding increase of efficiency, few thinking soldiers would deplore the loss of those whose lack of leisure, inclination, strength, or energy now acts but as dead weight on the zeal of the remainder. If their

discipline and leading be defective, providence seldom sides with the big battalions.

In the preceding pages I have said little of the good qualities of the American soldiers. I am none the less convinced that in some respects they were superior, as every army of volunteers will always be, to the conscript levies of European States; and I am of opinion that only sounder training is required to make our own citizen soldiers fully equal to the troops of any possible invader. This is a bold assertion. But if a strict system of rejection were to eliminate from the ranks all, whether officers or men, whom indolence, indifference, or physical incapacity renders unfit to bear arms, leaving only men of the same stamp as those who now, whether at schools of instruction, brigade camps, Easter manœuvres and the meetings of tactical societies, seize every opportunity to increase their knowledge, we might endure without anxiety even the absence of a large part of the regular army beyond the seas. The zest with which good volunteer officers undertake their duties is in itself sufficient to ensure the rapid mastery of these duties. With work which is half a pastime, wherein they find relief from the routine of their ordinary avocations, monotony has no place. The very freshness of their obligations is attractive of zeal and industry. Nor are they burdened with the thousand details of interior economy which occupy so largely the time and energy of the professional soldier. They can give almost every hour which they devote to their military duties to preparing themselves for the business of a campaign. They can bestow their whole attention on what is assuredly the most interesting, as it is the most important, part of the profession of arms, the leading of troops on the field of battle. The volunteer force, as at present constituted, is an excellent school of physical training. But this is scarcely the purpose for which it is maintained. Give it capable officers, trained company leaders and an educated staff, raise the standard of efficiency, exact a physical test, and it will become the strong arm of a free people, a safeguard against invasion, and an efficient substitute for conscription.

CHAPTER IX

THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, 1861–1865

PART I

THE COMPOSITION, ORGANISATION, SYSTEM AND TACTICS OF THE FEDERAL AND CONFEDERATE ARMIES

THE subject I have chosen for this paper is one of very wide extent, not only from the vast size of the theatre of war, the enormous armies engaged, the huge loss of life and expenditure of money, the number of battles and engagements, and the long time that the conflict lasted, but also from the many marked characteristics which distinguish American from European warfare, the novelties in organisation and in tactics, and the many new developments and inventions that for the first time made their appearance.

I shall, therefore, have to confine myself to a very brief and general sketch of the history of the war between the Northern and Southern States of America, that four years' struggle which is called by one side the Great Rebellion, by the other the War of Secession.

Which of these titles is the true one is still a vexed question, and one that it would be useless to discuss, but it is impossible to grasp the significance of certain circumstances and their bearing on the military operations without understanding the cause of quarrel.

At the end of 1860, and in the spring of 1861, the thirteen Southern States separated themselves from the remaining twenty with whom they had hitherto been joined as the United States of America.. In thus seceding they exercised a right which they undoubtedly believed was theirs under the terms of the constitution. It is possible that they may have been wrong in

their interpretation of these terms, but a close examination of the text of the constitution justifies, I think, the course they took. At the same time, it may be said that whilst clinging to the letter they ignored or missed the spirit. The framers of that charter most certainly never intended that one or more individual States should be free to leave the Union whenever they thought fit to do so.

However, in breaking away from the North, and in forming the Independent Republic of the Confederate States of America, in opposition to the Federal Union, not only did the people of the South believe that they were within their rights, but they also believed that the Government, in refusing to acknowledge their independence, and in attempting to bring them back to the Union by force of arms, acted without warrant or justification.

Whatever we may think of its wisdom, there is no doubt that the strength of this belief accounts for the length and bitterness of the war, and for the extraordinary resolution and devotion displayed by the whole population of the Confederate States.

The primary cause of war was the existence of slavery in the South. Here, in a cotton and tobacco growing territory, where the climate prevented the white man labouring on the plantations, there were 4,000,000 negro slaves. In the North, where the climate was more temperate, and where the greater part of the community was engaged in manufacture, there were no slaves and but few negroes. The constant tide of immigration provided an abundance of labour.

But slavery was only the indirect cause of the split between the States, and it was not the sole cause. For many years the United States had been divided into two sections, on the one side the slave-holding cotton-raising States of the South; on the other, the great manufacturing cities of the east, and the farming and backwoods territories of the west and north.

Between these two sections, corresponding, roughly speaking, to the two great political parties of the country, Republican and Democrat, had gradually sprung up a spirit of bitter hostility, created by collision on questions of the tariff and finance, and

intensified by a wide difference in social life and habits. The South, colonised in old days by the English Cavaliers, possessed in its great planters and landowners an aristocracy, and by this aristocracy it was ruled.

The North, colonised by the Puritans and by Dutch traders, was devoted principally to commerce and manufactures. The two sections had little in common ; and we are not surprised to find that for many years before the war broke out they had been drawing further and further apart.

The breach between them was widened by the existence of a party in the North who demanded the abolition of slavery throughout the States. This party was but small in numbers before the war. Indeed, to read the Northern newspapers of the period when it began to put forward its doctrines most vehemently, it would seem that slavery had as many advocates in the North as in the South. But, be this as it may, when, in 1860, Abraham Lincoln, who, rightly or wrongly, was believed by the slave-holders to be but a tool in the hands of the Abolitionists, was elected President of the United States, the Southerners, regarding the institution to which they owed their prosperity as menaced with destruction, determined to exercise the right of secession. The North drew the sword in order to punish them as rebels, and by no means with the purpose of giving freedom to the slaves. In fact, in his inaugural message to Congress, President Lincoln distinctly affirmed that the Federal Government had no right to interfere with the domestic institutions of individual States.

The first State to secede was South Carolina, on December 20, 1860. It was followed at short intervals by the remaining Southern States ; but it is worth while noticing that it was not until April 14, 1861, nearly four months later, that the Federal Government, in the person of the President, declared its intention of restoring the Union.

This long delay is curious. It was due to the generous temper of Lincoln, who seems to have believed that time and discussion would heal all differences, and to the aversion of the whole Northern people from civil war. In fact the temper of the North, when secession was first proclaimed, was anything but warlike.

The Abolitionists came in for more abuse than the Secessionists. But this temper changed into uncompromising hostility when the South Carolina Militia bombarded Fort Sumter, in Charleston harbour, and compelled a small garrison of United States troops to surrender. The insult to the national flag appears to have made the Northern people at last realise that the Union was in danger. Lincoln's first act was to call for 75,000 volunteers, each State furnishing a certain number of regiments.

Now the first idea that occurs to us, when we hear of the Southern States being declared rebels, is, why did not the Government employ the army and navy, the national police, to punish the seceders? Unfortunately for the Government both army and navy were on the very smallest scale. There were but 18,000 regular soldiers in the United States, and these were serving on the far western border, protecting the frontier settlements against the Indians. And again, the Southern States, directly they seceded, had called out their Militia and formed corps of volunteers, soon amounting to a considerable force. The North, in default of other troops, had to follow suit; and so the great conflict was fought out by hosts of unprofessional soldiers, of whom, broadly speaking, the superior officers alone belonged to the regular army.

Now the fact of the personnel of the armies being for the most part unprofessional had the effect, in the minds of European soldiers, of causing a certain contempt for the American troops. All acknowledged their courage and endurance; but it was generally considered that the war was conducted on unscientific principles, and had, therefore, few lessons worth the learning. A saying, attributed—wrongly, I believe—to Moltke, that the American battles were no more than conflicts between armed mobs, well illustrates the attitude of European soldiers. But a certain number of officers, English, French, and German, who had the energy to go over and look at the fighting for themselves, amongst them Lord Wolseley, the Comte de Paris, and Colonels Fletcher and Fremantle, of the Guards, convinced themselves, from actual experience, that this attitude was unjust.

Whatever may have been the faults, due to want of discipline and training, during the first year of the war, 1862 saw a different state of things: and these competent eye-witnesses found then that, whilst the constitution of the armies and their methods of making war differed very greatly from those in force on this side the Atlantic, there were hosts of magnificent fighting men, with leaders who knew the secret of maintaining discipline amongst their volunteers, and of handling them in the field with skill and with success. They learned, also, that if the procedure of European warfare was very often departed from, it was because the nature of the country and the conditions under which marches were made and battles fought were utterly unlike anything that obtained in Europe. No European general has yet been called upon to carry on a campaign in a wilderness of primeval forest, covering an area twice as large as the German Empire, and as thinly populated as Russia. Nor has any Government been obliged to organise enormous armies for the invasion of such a territory from a multitude of untrained and inexperienced civilians, with the help of a handful of regular officers, and to manufacture, to collect, and to issue, the whole of the matériel needed for their use. Moreover, as the war came to be more closely studied, it was found that every appliance which ingenuity or science could suggest had been brought into play, and that in very many matters Europe had been anticipated. Breech-loaders, repeating rifles, and ironclads were all of them first employed in America; and balloons, torpedoes, submarine mines, the telegraph, signalling both by flag and lamp, were utilised to a degree hitherto unheard of; while the extraordinary engineering works of several of the campaigns have no parallel in European warfare. I may instance one. In the year 1863, the Northern army in the west found it necessary to repair a line of railway 102 miles in length. An infantry division, 8,000 strong, was detailed for the work. The whole of the tools necessary had to be forged by the men, and no less than 182 bridges had to be rebuilt. The work was done in forty days.

Great sieges were also undertaken; and earthworks and entrenchments assumed an importance far greater than had

hitherto been the case, and were applied with an ingenuity of which we have not a single previous example.

Even from a very early stage, the cavalry was far more successfully worked as the eyes and ears of the commanders than by either Prussians or Austrians in 1866; and in their mounted force the Americans developed a new arm, whose achievements are one of the most remarkable features of modern campaigns.

Nor were the Americans—the Federals, at least—behind-hand in matters of supply. The transport both by land and sea was most efficient. The commissariat exceedingly well managed, and often plentiful even to luxury. All the resources of civilisation followed the troops into the field. Before some of the greatest battles, when the men were lying down waiting for the signal to advance, the newsboys went down the ranks crying the latest edition of the daily papers; and in certainly one of the camps of the invading armies were posted notices stating that agents were present to arrange for the embalming of those who fell in action, and for forwarding them to their friends in the very neatest coffins at the very lowest prices.

Even those who regarded the American volunteers as indifferent soldiers had always to allow that their courage was beyond question. A few details will give an idea of the resolution with which they fought.

In the four years of the war there were more than 2,200 engagements, including skirmishes.

Of these 149 were important actions, generally involving a loss of at least 1,000 men.

The loss of life during the whole war has been reckoned at something like 500,000. In the soldiers' cemeteries, scattered through the States, 300,000 Federals are known to be buried.

In each of two of the greatest battles, Gettysburg and the Wilderness, the loss, of both sides together, amounted to 50,000 killed, wounded, and missing. In both of these battles the number of those who met their death in the field was larger than the death-roll of the English army during the whole of the Peninsular War, and including Quatre Bras and Waterloo. In both of them the loss of life was greater than at Gravelotte although the numbers engaged were not half so large.

In the month's fighting in Virginia, in 1864, the Federal army under Grant lost 70,000 men.

I have emphasised these bloodthirsty statistics in order to give some idea of the scale on which the battles were fought; and if the 'butchers' bills' were gigantic, the numbers engaged and the extent of the theatre of war were even more remarkable.

At one period the number of men actually serving amounted to 1,500,000; the number of enlistments during the war, on the Northern side alone, was close upon 3,000,000, and this out of a population of 20,500,000.

As regards population, and consequently physical strength, the South was much inferior. There were but 7,500,000 whites to 4,000,000 slaves. The latter were not employed as soldiers by the Confederates, but their labour was of the greatest value, releasing the white men for service with the armies, providing them with food and equipment, and building fortifications. Nevertheless, the strength of the South always fell short of that of the North, and during the last year of the war amounted to very little more than a fourth.

The North was the invader. Twice was her territory penetrated by the Confederates, but never for more than a few score miles, and no single district was occupied for more than a few weeks.

During the four years of the war, on the other hand, nearly every part of the Confederacy was, at one time or another, trodden by the enemy. The theatre of war, then, spread over the thirteen seceding States, and the area of those States contained nearly 800,000 square miles; in other words, a territory as large as the whole of the Continent and more than half as large as India. To India, an English soldier, Sir Henry Havelock-Allan, who witnessed some part of the operations in America, has likened the face of the country over which the armies moved. There are the same great plains and mighty rivers, navigable almost from their source; the same absence of hills; the same great level spaces between far distant mountain ranges; the same scarcity of roads and railways; the same long journeys, not counted by hours but by days and weeks, between town and town. Like India, it is a country of

'magnificent distances.' In two essential particulars there was a difference. The Southern States, generally speaking, were covered by enormous forests, and the climate was not too hot for military operations at any time of the year. In fact, the mud of the South was an infinitely worse obstacle than its fiercest heat.

One point should always be borne in mind in studying the war. The roads of the South, few in number, were infamous in quality. The railroads were rough in the extreme, made of the rudest material; but if they were easily destroyed they were just as readily repaired.

I have already said that the higher commands on either side were filled by regular officers. When the war began there were more than 1,200 individuals in the States who had passed through the Military Academy at West Point; of these one-fifth were Southerners and joined the Confederacy. In order to appreciate the work these officers did in the war, it will be well to turn for a moment to the method in which they were educated and trained.

West Point is, undoubtedly, one of the most remarkable of military institutions, and one of the most satisfactory of military schools.

The word school is almost a misnomer. It is, in fact, a university, where the cadets are under military discipline and command, organised as a battalion, and taught military duties in addition to a very severe course of general education. Four years is the length of their stay. During that time they learn their duties, practically and theoretically, as soldiers of the infantry, cavalry, artillery, and engineers, and the discipline is strict as the instruction is thorough. Up to 1850, military history and minor tactics, and the art of war, were not included in the course, but it speaks well for the good sense of the American officers that the majority of them recognised and remedied this deficiency themselves. A society was formed for the study of Napoleon's campaigns, and the greatest of his campaigns were familiar ground.

The practical training of both officers and men was peculiar. The army was split up into numerous small detachments

along the Indian frontier. The largest garrison consisted only of a few troops or companies. It was seldom that a colonel had the whole of his command under his hand at one time. Many of the posts, isolated in the Western deserts, were held only by a handful of men. 'During my army service,' said one of the great Confederate generals, 'I learned all about commanding fifty United States dragoons and forgot everything else.'

Now although this system of dissemination and detachments prevented the senior officers and the staff from gaining any practical experience of the movements of troops in large bodies, or learning how to work the three arms in combination, it had a good side as well as a bad one. Not only were the officers in command of the numerous posts compelled to act on their own responsibility, but command had often to be exercised by those of junior rank; and the constant expeditions against the Indians, sometimes employing a thousand men, but more often a troop or company, increased the self-reliance and habits of command already acquired in time of peace. I think there is nothing more remarkable in the history of the war than the capacity for accepting responsibility, and acting on their judgment, shown by the regular officers of every rank. And they were cool-headed enough to draw the line between initiative and rashness. In the very first great battle, that of Bull Run, the quick initiative of two young brigadiers, Jackson and Evans, who had neither of them commanded even a battalion in peace, practically saved the day for the South. The capacity for accepting the responsibilities of independent command is the more remarkable when we learn that by far the greater number of those who rose during the war to the command of army corps and armies had held no higher grade in the old service than that of captain.

Of the other officers holding high rank on both sides, those who went into the war straight from civil life, some did excellent service even in command of army corps and on the staff; but many, who were too rapidly promoted, failed ignominiously, and in many cases the purchase of experience was a very costly business for the cause they served. As a proof of the value of

the training given by a military life, I may mention that one of the few foreigners—and there were many engaged—who was promoted to a high command, had once been in the English army, holding the rank of corporal in the 41st Foot. Cleburne's division was by no means the least efficient in the Confederacy, and he himself attributed his rapid rise to the habits he had acquired in the ranks of his old regiment, and prided himself that he at least knew how to keep his white facings cleaner than those of any other general in the Southern army.

Of practical experience the senior officers had nearly all had a good deal in the Mexican War of 1846–7, and the majority of all ranks had seen service against the Indians.

I have said that one-fifth of the West Point graduates resigned their commissions in the regular army, and offered their swords to the Confederacy. The rest of the army, officers and men, held to the Union. It is interesting to note how the services of the officers were utilised by either side.

The Confederate President, Jefferson Davis, was himself a 'West Pointer.' He had served with distinction in Mexico; and afterwards as Secretary of State for War he had had many opportunities of learning the capabilities of the senior officers of the army. This knowledge he turned to good account. His selections for command were judicious in the extreme. Regardless of seniority he chose the man he thought best suited for the billet, and his choice seldom belied his judgment. All those regular officers who joined the Confederacy were placed in high command, or on the General Staff; some took over volunteer battalions, but as a rule at least a brigade was found for them.

In the North, on the contrary, the regular officers were at first somewhat overlooked in favour of the volunteers, and nearly 600 captains and subalterns were retained with their own regiments.

Nor did Mr. Davis, taught by his military experience, desert a commander because he had been unfortunate. He knew too well how much luck has to do with military operations, and so long as a commander showed skill and resolution he was maintained in his position. Both his greatest generals, Lee and

Stonewall Jackson, met with ill success in their first independent command. Once only did the Southern President depart from this rule, in relieving General Johnston in 1864, and then he committed an irreparable mistake.

Very different was the procedure in the North. Neither Abraham Lincoln nor his Secretary at War had any previous knowledge of military affairs, but, notwithstanding, they not only attempted to dictate to the generals in the field, but settled for themselves who those generals should be. If their efforts to direct military operations were disastrous, as Lord Wolseley has pointed out, their efforts at selection were little better. The voice of the people exercised much influence over their choice, and generals who had won trifling successes over inferior troops were preferred to those who had proved themselves worthy, if unsuccessful, opponents of the best generals of the Confederacy. Commander succeeded commander with startling rapidity. The chief army of the North, that which was engaged in Virginia, was commanded by no less than six different officers, each one of whom, except the last, was degraded for ill success. At the same time, volunteer generals who commanded great political influence were retained in their command, despite the constant exhibition of the most glaring imcompetency. Later in the war, the President and his advisers, and even the sovereign people, learned wisdom. In General Grant they found at last a successful leader, and they forbore to interfere with him. He was allowed to choose his own subordinates, and to dismiss those who were incapable as he pleased. The power entrusted to him he carried out with no sparing hand. In almost the last battle, during the night which intervened between its phases, a corps commander, who had served with much distinction throughout the war, but had shown himself somewhat deficient in energy at critical moments, was summarily relieved of his command; and this not by Grant himself, but by Sheridan, the general in immediate charge of the operations.

Not the least interesting study connected with the war is that which concerns itself with the individual commanders on either side. Their personal histories are all well known, and

a general survey of them brings a number of interesting facts to light. As a rule they were young. Very few of those who made great names for themselves were more than fifty. Stuart and Sheridan, the two great cavalry leaders, were under thirty when the war broke out, and several of their most distinguished lieutenants had no more than four or five years' service. The most dashing Horse Artilleryman in the Confederacy was twenty-three when he was killed; and one of the best cavalry divisional commanders on the Federal side, General Mackenzie, did not even leave West Point until the war was nearly half over. There are also some interesting facts bearing on the question of training and experience. I have already alluded to General Cleburne. We should scarcely expect to find that some three years' service in the rank of corporal in an English regiment fitted a man to command a division in the field. Some of the volunteer officers, moreover, who joined without any previous military knowledge whatever, made dashing and skilful leaders, notably General Terry on the Northern side, and Forrest on the Southern. The latter, who proved himself a most able tactician, would most certainly have failed in any written examination for promotion. He could read or write only with the greatest difficulty.

Again, several of the most famous generals had, for a long time before the war, severed themselves from all connection with command and with the service.

Longstreet, one of the very ablest officers in the South, came from the pay department. Grant had been regimental quartermaster, had left the army and been employed as a clerk in a tannery. Sherman had only thirteen years' army service, and had since been lawyer, banker, and professor in a military school; D. H. Hill had been professor in a university, and afterwards a lawyer; McClellan, president of a railway company; and Stonewall Jackson, perhaps the greatest soldier of them all, had served but four years in the Artillery, and for the ten years preceding the war had been Professor of Mathematics and Artillery in the Military Institute of Virginia. Another Confederate general was at the same time a bishop; and he was not the only ecclesiastic who, having left the army for the

church, resumed his former trade when the war broke out. Lee's chief of artillery, General Pendleton, was an Episcopal clergyman, who, it is said, condoned his relapse by always prefacing the command to fire with the words, 'The Lord have mercy on their souls!'

None of these officers appear to have found the want of that practice and training which are given by immediate contact with the troops. Grant and Sherman both tell us in their memoirs that when they first took command they were ignorant of the drill then in use. But it is possible that had they never severed their connection with the army, their success would have been far more remarkable than it was. Many others in like case with themselves failed ignominiously. They were but the exceptions that prove the rule. Without character and capacity, physical and moral courage, coolness, and self-reliance, it is impossible that a man can become a great soldier. But, however strong he may be in the possession of such qualities, study and practice can never be anything else but beneficial. In some degree they are essential; and those who are not exceptionally gifted should take to heart the opinion of one of the most experienced of the Confederate generals. 'Conscientious study,' he says, 'will not perhaps make them great, but it will make them respectable; and when the responsibility of command comes, they will not disgrace their flag, injure their cause, nor murder their men.'

Now as to the regimental officers and men.

The private soldiers on both sides were drawn from all classes of society. Men of the best breeding and culture in America, of high education and great wealth, marched shoulder to shoulder with small farmers and clerks, with mechanics and labourers. In the North there was a proportion of men who enlisted merely for the sake of high bounties, and a number of foreigners. In the South a proportion were conscripts; but, on the whole, the patriotism and good-will of the armies were undeniable.

The number of foreigners in the Federal armies has been greatly exaggerated, but there were whole divisions of Germans, and on both sides there were battalions and brigades of Irish.

It may be interesting to mention that whilst the Irish were everywhere counted as excellent soldiers, the Germans fell short of such a reputation.

The *moral* of the armies, leavened by the presence of men of intelligence and high principle, was necessarily good. Crime was practically unknown; of insubordination there was very little, but, at the same time, the standard of discipline was never a very high one. It appears to have depended altogether on the personal character and capacity of the commanding officers, and even in the best regiments it seems to have been impossible to exact the same strict regard for duty as in a professional army. The truth is that neither officers nor men possessed the *habit* of obedience. They were willing enough, patriotic enough, and as plucky as soldiers ever were, but they could not be depended on to obey under every circumstance, no matter by whom the order was given. Obedience was not an instinct, and good-will did not prove an efficient substitute for the machine-like subordination of the regular. The question of American discipline is a difficult one. I do not know of any writer on the war who discusses it at length, and all direct information on the subject comes from stray remarks and admissions that might easily pass unnoticed. But at the same time it is an interesting question, especially to those who may have to deal with our own Volunteers, and perhaps it will not be out of place if I give the impressions that a long study of the history of the war leaves on my own mind. In the first place it seems that the men wanted a deal of humouring, and the regimental officers also. Mistakes had to be overlooked and ignorance excused. Marks of respect to rank and the ordinary etiquette of an army had often to be dispensed with, and it was injudicious to interfere between the regimental officers and their men. Freedom of speech could not be checked, and there was much familiarity between even the generals and the privates. Still, taking into consideration the democratic constitution of the States, it is possible that these things might have existed, and 'the thinking bayonets,' as their leaders were so fond of calling them, have been as reliable soldiers as the best of European troops. But there are certain facts which show, I think,

that 'the thinking bayonets,' however high their spirit, would have done better had their habits of obedience been so ingrained as to rise superior to all personal feelings whatever, whether of danger, hunger, or fatigue. These facts are as follows :—

1. The very prevalent habit of straggling from the ranks on the line of march which seems to have existed certainly for the first three years, and to have existed unchecked, and we can understand how much the generals must have been hampered in their operations by their uncertainty as to the number of men they could count on to reach a fixed place at a fixed time.

2. The very indifferent manner in which the infantry outpost duties were carried out, at least for the first two years of the war. Instances of surprises, not of small parties, but of whole armies, were numerous. Of course in the forests of the South outpost duty was most exacting, but that more than one great battle should have been begun by the rush of a long line on troops surprised in the act of cooking, or asleep in their tents, seems a proof that sentries and patrols were not so vigilant as they should have been.

3. The absolute want of control over the fire of the men. The only symptom of fire discipline was that the men could generally be induced to reserve their fire to short range where they were well sheltered and the enemy was advancing without firing. Directly the bullets began to fly the men 'took charge.'

These shortcomings bear out Lord Wolseley's opinion that the presence of a single army corps of regular soldiers would have turned the scale in favour of either side.

Before I turn to the actual campaigns there are two circumstances bearing very strongly on tactical efficiency which should be noticed.

The Southern States were a wilderness of forest, swamp, and river. Game was abundant, and the great hunting grounds were free to all. Sport in all its forms was the regular pastime of the whole population, and the men of the South were accustomed from childhood to the use of the gun and rifle. 'Nine-tenths of our men,' says a Confederate officer, 'were excellent shots and practised judges of distance.' A book written by an

Englishman, who served with a Confederate regiment, tells us that on Enfield rifles being issued to the men the first thing they did was to knock off the elevating back-sight. They judged distance by instinct and wanted no mechanical contrivance to assist their aim. Now in the North, the people of the Eastern States and the foreigners who enlisted knew very little about shooting; and I do not believe that they had much ball practice during their service, except on the field of battle. It was by these troops that the Confederates were opposed in Virginia, and the superior marksmanship of the Southerners had undoubtedly much to do with their long succession of victories. In the western quarter of the theatre of war on the other hand, in the Mississippi Valley, the fighting was of a much more give and take character; in fact here the Northerners were more often successful. To this result their superior numbers had doubtless something to say. But it was probably due rather to the characteristics of the Northern troops engaged. The men were drawn from the Western States; and among them were many farmers or backwoodsmen, as expert with the rifle as their opponents.

The second circumstance is that the Southerners were a nation of horsemen. Fox-hunting flourished in many parts of the States, and no white man ever walked when he could ride. In the North the very contrary was the case. Horsemanship was practically an unknown art, and had it not been that the regular cavalry regiments were available for service with the Federal armies, it is probable that the superiority of the Southern troopers in the first two years of the war would have been more marked than it actually was. It will be seen, then, that the Confederacy, inferior in numbers, in resources, and in wealth as it was, started with two great tactical advantages, advantages which it took the North a very long time to overtake. But at the same time there were counterbalancing advantages on the side of the Federals. Their artillery was always superior to that of the Confederates, both in material and in personnel. The forty-eight batteries of the regular army served as models to the Northern volunteers. One regular battery was grouped with three manned by volunteers,

and the latter quickly profited by the example set them. Again, the supply of horses in the North was practically inexhaustible, whilst in the South there was always the greatest difficulty in providing the cavalry and artillery with remounts.

No preliminary sketch of the armies would be complete without a reference to the mounted arm. Wooded and close although the country was, this branch of the service soon showed its value, and at the end of the war the strength of the Federal cavalry was over 80,000. As is well known, the American horse resembled mounted riflemen rather than ordinary cavalry. Although they were quite capable of charging, and were just as efficient on the outpost line as the best of European cavalry, the principal part of their fighting was done on foot. And this was not because they were indifferent riders or were ill-trained—far from it—but because of the close and difficult nature of the country. Lord Wolseley has been rather severely criticised in America because he has stated that on the theatre of war there was no ground suitable for cavalry engagements as we understand them in Europe. His critic asserts that there was a large extent of such ground. I believe, however, that the ideas of Lord Wolseley and his opponent as to what sort of ground is suitable for cavalry work differ very greatly. The former was probably thinking of the great plains of France and Germany, stretching away for mile upon mile without the least obstacle to free movement. The American was probably thinking of the clearings in the Southern woodlands, spaces very circumscribed in comparison with the rolling downs of Mars-la-Tour. There is a set of maps, in minute detail, of the scene of many of the American campaigns, and it is hard to find on any of them any locality so unencumbered with woodland as to afford a satisfactory arena for the ideal cavalry battle. I have carefully measured the scene of the battle of Brandy Station, the greatest cavalry engagement of the war, and I can find no open ground, free from wood or stream, more than a mile square. Besides, the large clearings which did occur had been made by the farmers, whose barns and fences considerably interfered with the manœuvres of the cavalry. A personal knowledge of Virginia has convinced me that it is a

country just as unsuited to ordinary cavalry fighting, as we understand it, as England itself. It is quite possible that had the country been open the Americans would, before the war had ended, have possessed a splendid force of cavalry pure and simple. But, as it was, in such a country, there was little use for such a force, and the cavalry leaders very quickly discovered that their men were far more valuable as mounted riflemen.

The next interesting question is: to what degree did these mounted riflemen combine their two characteristics? Were they good infantry and at the same time good cavalry?

On the outpost line they were most efficient. The extraordinary raids they made on communications and magazines were a distinctly new feature in war. They stormed earthworks, they captured cities, and they even went so far as to attack and capture gunboats, but, at the same time, when dismounted they were not considered as efficient as the ordinary infantry, and as cavalry I do not believe that they would have been able to cope with good European troops in open country. But they were admirably adapted for all mounted work in the Southern forests, and no European cavalry would have been able to touch them on their own ground. The American idea, to this day, however, is that good mounted riflemen are more than a match, on any ground, for European cavalry.

The chief staff officers on both sides were recruited from the regular forces, but the enormous armies demanded a very large reinforcement from the volunteers. I need hardly say that an army of 18,000 men, scattered all over the western prairies, could scarcely be expected to supply any large number of well-trained staff officers, and, at first, whilst the staff was new to its work, many were the blunders which were due to the inexperience and ignorance of those who composed it. Later in the war things were very different, and in many of the campaigns, such were the celerity and precision with which enormous masses of men were moved, handled, and supplied, that the first thing that strikes us is what a remarkably efficient staff the generals must have had.

As to armament, I may add that the infantry on both sides were armed with muzzle-loading rifles. The guns also were

muzzle-loaders, rifled and smooth bore. The Northern cavalry, after the first year, carried breech-loading and repeating carbines, as well as sabres and revolvers. In the arms of the Southern troopers there was little uniformity. Many of the regiments were supplied with carbines, but others carried long rifles. There were regiments of lancers raised by the Federals in 1861, but they were soon converted into ordinary dragoons.

After the bombardment and surrender of Fort Sumter had brought matters to a crisis, and President Lincoln had called out his volunteers, the Federal Government set to work to devise a plan of campaign; and there are certain geographical and political features which must be made clear before that plan can be properly understood.

1. The long seaboard of the Southern States, and the small number of harbours.

2. The Mississippi river, running from north to south right through the States, and dividing Texas, the great cattle-raising State, from the remainder of the Confederacy.

3. The position of the north-western corner of Virginia, running up into the heart of the North, and contracting the isthmus which, south of Lake Erie, joined the eastern and western portions of the Northern territory to a neck little more than 100 miles in width.

4. The position of the rival capitals, Washington and Richmond, not more than 100 miles apart, and connected by two lines of railway. Washington was only separated from Virginia by the Potomac, which is there a magnificent river, nearly a mile wide. Thirty miles higher up it is fordable.

5. The Shenandoah Valley, bounded east and west by high mountains, exceedingly fertile, and the great corn-growing district of Virginia. Not only did it supply the rest of the State, but it afforded a covered approach into Maryland, threatening the Federal capital.

6. The divided opinions of the border States, Missouri, Kentucky, and Maryland; and the very strong feeling in the north-western corner of Virginia in favour of the Union.

The first step the Northerners decided on was to blockade the Southern ports. The North had nearly all the vessels of

the navy at its command; very few of the crews had joined the Confederacy, and it was thus possible to prevent supplies of any kind reaching the South from Europe. As the South was dependent for almost everything, except bread, meat, sugar, and tobacco, on other nations, the blockade was a most effective weapon against her. To starve her into submission did not seem difficult. She had no manufactures, except a few iron-foundries; no wool or cloth; no tanneries; no powder factories, no gun factories; almost all the railway workshops were in the North; there was very little salt in her stores, and no tea or coffee. In fact, almost every single necessary of existence came from abroad, and had it not been that the arsenals within her territory were well supplied, and that her victories in Virginia provided her troops with equipment captured from the enemy, it is difficult to see how she could have carried on the war at all. As it was, the dearth of material resources always hampered her generals, as may be imagined when I state that they appear to have often depended for fresh supplies of ammunition on what they could take from the enemy.

The next step was to occupy north-west Virginia, and to deprive the Confederacy of this point of vantage. This was done without much difficulty, and the South was never able to reconquer it.

After the blockade had been established, and north-west Virginia occupied, the military policy of the Federals had two objectives.

1. In the east, the capture of Richmond.

2. In the west, the occupation of the Mississippi Valley.

Before the latter could be accomplished, the border States of Missouri and Kentucky had to be secured. These States were important to the Confederates as recruiting grounds, and they fought hard to retain them. But eventually the North proved superior. The border States were lost; and in July 1863, by the capture of Vicksburg, the great fortress of the Mississippi, General Grant made the river free to the Federal gunboats from New Orleans upwards, and thus cut the Confederacy in two.

During the third year of the war, July 1863 to July

1864, the Federals in the west were occupied in securing the State of Tennessee, and in pushing forward towards the lines of railway which connected the States of Georgia and Alabama with Richmond. Their progress was slow, and they met with stubborn resistance at every point.

Meanwhile, in the east, during these three years, the North had won no important advantage whatever. They had sent, at intervals, no less than five commanders into Virginia, with the purpose of capturing Richmond, but their armies had never won a single victory on Southern soil.

Twice had the Confederates, under Lee, crossed the Potomac; the first time into Maryland, in order to get recruits; the second time they had advanced into Pennsylvania. On both occasions Lee was compelled to retire; and in July 1863, the same month and almost on the same day that Vicksburg fell in the west, he was defeated at Gettysburg, in Pennsylvania, by General Meade.

Still, when the fourth year of the war opened, the Federals were very little nearer Richmond than they had been at the very outset. The capture of the chief city of the South and the destruction of her armies seemed as far off as ever.

In April 1864, the Northern people were scarcely hopeful. They saw no signs as yet of the end, and it seemed as if the frightful expenditure of life and money might drag itself on for years and years. But early in 1864 Grant had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Federal armies, and President Lincoln not only refrained from interference with his strategy, but gave him most loyal support.

Grant was a man of iron will and indefatigable energy, and he infused something of his own spirit into the operations of the Northern armies. His strategical conceptions, too, were broad and sound. Before he took over the chief command the Federal forces in the east and west had been entirely independent of each other; they had never worked in combination, and the Confederates, possessing the interior lines, had been able to transfer troops from one quarter of the theatre of war to the other without impediment. The Southern forces were divided into two main armies, one in Virginia, the other in

the west, and Grant determined, with his superior numbers, to give these armies no respite, and to prevent the one from reinforcing the other.

The western operations were entrusted to General Sherman. The Commander-in-Chief accompanied the army moving against Richmond. As to Sherman's campaign, I need only say that it was completely successful, and had for its results the destruction of the army opposed to him, and a march across Georgia from Atlanta to Savannah, for the second time cutting the Confederacy in two, destroying the Southern arsenals and magazines, and isolating Virginia and North Carolina from the States on the south coast. Savannah was taken in December 1864.

But, although successful in Georgia, the Federals in Virginia, opposed by Lee and the finest of the Confederate armies, an army small in number but composed of veteran soldiers inspirited by many victories, met with the most determined opposition.

The first week in May Grant set out with 130,000 men to crush Lee's 60,000 and to capture Richmond. For a whole month the two armies fought day after day, the Federals dashing fiercely at the Confederate lines, recoiling with fearful losses, and then moving off to try to turn their enemy's flank. But no sooner was the Northern army set in motion than Lee moved too, and whenever Grant turned in the direction of Richmond he found his watchful antagonist still barring the way. At length after fifty days' marching and fighting, Grant found himself with the Confederate army between him and the Southern capital, holding the famous lines of Petersburg. He had lost in battle since the campaign commenced nearly 70,000 men, the Confederates not more than 25,000. But the Federal Government continued to pour in reinforcements, and his numbers were still almost twice as large as those of his opponent. But he had had enough of attacking the Southern breastworks; and, it is said, so appalled were the Northern people at the awful slaughter of their soldiers, and so hopeless of success, that the Confederates were never so near to independence as in August 1864.

Grant now determined to lay siege to Petersburg, and to

starve his enemy out. And indeed it seemed an easy task. If the war lay heavy on the North, it lay far heavier on the South. There were no more men to fill the ranks of her armies. The greater part of the country was exhausted by the march of the invaders. Old men and boys, unfit for service, were called upon to take their places at the front. As Grant himself said, 'the Confederacy was robbing the cradle and the grave to fill the ranks.' Of the sufferings in Richmond during the long siege of eight months it is pitiable to speak. The soldiers themselves were badly fed. The work at the front, with their inferior numbers, was unceasing and exhausting, and yet they bore it without complaint. But in the great city behind, in the hospitals, and in the homes of those whom the war had made widowed and fatherless, want and famine bore a far more terrible aspect. And yet there were none who murmured. Whilst Lee and his army still held their ground that indomitable people never abandoned hope.

But at length the end came. Richmond was cut off almost on every side. Sickness and starvation had reduced the army to 40,000 men, and Lee was compelled to abandon the lines he had so long defended. He broke away; but it was too late. The net closed round him, and at Appomattox Court House, some seventy miles west of Richmond, the army of the Confederacy surrendered on April 9, 1865. The great war was over and the Union was restored.

Such is a very bare sketch of the salient points of the military operations.

PART II

THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE BELLIGERENTS

I have already discussed the strategy of the American War in so far as it was affected by geographical and political considerations; I have now to deal with the actual strategical conceptions and operations of either side. As regards the main principle on which they acted, it has been said that the two belligerents fell naturally into their respective rôles. The North, intent on crushing out rebellion, was the invader; whilst the South, as

Colonel Chesney writes in one of his essays on the war, as the weaker party outnumbered by nearly three to one, was compelled to stand on the defensive. Now, despite this very high authority, I cannot help thinking that the principle laid down, like almost every other military maxim, may be more honoured in the breach than in the observance. We know the stereotyped answer to all tactical problems, 'it depends on the nature of the ground.' That answer, vague as it is, is often the best that one can give. It implies that tactics are subject to no rule of thumb; and the same applies to strategy in general, and to the maxim we are speaking of in particular. There is no compulsion about it. The possibility of the weaker party assuming the rôle of invader depends not on the relative numbers of the two armies, but upon their *moral*, on their condition of readiness, and, above all, on the possibility of meeting the enemy in detail. Napoleon, whenever he could seize the initiative, never hesitated to throw himself into hostile territory, even when he was inferior in strength to the mass of the opposing forces; and it is remarkable that General Stonewall Jackson, certainly one of the greatest of American generals, constantly advocated the invasion of the North. But in the councils of the South political expediency over-rode military considerations. Defence not defiance was the motto of the young Republic; and her rulers, always trusting that sooner or later the European Powers would intervene in her favour, preferred that the Confederacy should pose as a State defending her liberties rather than as ones eeking them aggressively. Twice only did General Lee, with the finest army of the South, cross the border and advance into Northern territory. On the second occasion he was met and defeated by Meade, at Gettysburg, in Pennsylvania, north of Washington; but to anyone who reads the history of the war, and realises the apprehension, the unreadiness, and the military weakness of the Northern States at the time the battle was fought, the truth of the saying that at Gettysburg the South was 'within a stone's throw of independence' is no less manifest than the wisdom, under the conditions, of an offensive policy.

But, preferring the defensive as they did, the Confederates

made good use of their opportunities. Two points are remarkable. The main armies, one in Virginia and one in the west, were, generally speaking, always maintained at the greatest possible strength; strategical points, which lay outside the reach of these armies, were garrisoned by the very smallest force compatible with security. The principle was recognised that such points usually stand or fall with the success or failure of the larger operations. However, there was one remarkable and fatal exception. After the fall of Vicksburg no less than 55,000 men were retained in Texas and Louisiana, the trans-Mississippi States, and this at a time when the main armies of the South, for want of reinforcements, were absolutely unable to assume the offensive. Owing to the loss of the Mississippi these States were useless to the Confederacy. Fifty-five thousand men, who would probably have turned the scale elsewhere, were thus injudiciously employed in guarding unprofitable territory. It is only fair, however, to notice that there seems to have been a certain reluctance amongst a portion of the troops to serve outside their own States. The second point is the advantage afforded by the possession of interior lines. The Federal armies, invading the South from the north-west and north-east, were more than 1,000 miles apart; and when, after the second year, they had secured the border States and the Mississippi, they practically surrounded the enormous territory which the Confederates still possessed. Within this huge half-circle the Southern generals were free to move their troops as they wished. They used their freedom to some purpose. The point most actively threatened was again and again reinforced from the other quarter of the theatre of war. Thus, in 1863, after Gettysburg, 20,000 of Lee's army, under Longstreet, one of his best generals, were sent to the west, and enabled the army in that section to gain the important victory of Chickamauga, which for several months completely paralysed the Federal advance into Georgia.

At the same time it must be said that this constant and effective shifting of strength from one wing to the other was made feasible by the errors of the Federals. Their two main armies of the west and east worked on wholly independent lines.

Until Grant took command in 1864, they never operated in combination. Whilst one was moving forward the other was resting or preparing for a fresh advance; and this disjointed state of things permitted their enemy to reinforce the threatened point at his leisure. Grant initiated a new policy. He pressed his opponents at every point simultaneously. Relying on his superior numbers he neutralised all the Southern advantages of interior lines. It may be argued that this strategy entailed a useless waste of life; that the better plan would have been to hold the enemy on one wing, and to attack him in force upon the other. But here we must remember the enormous extent of the theatre of war. It was easy enough for the Southern armies to get across the Confederacy in a very short time, and, by destroying the railroads, to make pursuit hopeless. This was prevented by Grant's energy in pushing the attack at every point.

The Federal strategy of the last year of the war, with Grant in command and Sherman his lieutenant, stands out in marked relief to the disjointed, partial, and complicated operations of the previous years. The plans of campaign evolved during the first phase of the war were ingenious in the extreme. Simplicity was despised. The great idea was to surround the enemy, to cut off all his communications, and to attack him in front, flanks and rear, at one and the same time. Unfortunately this conception made it necessary to break up the invading army into several columns, and the enemy, using his interior lines, had little difficulty in spoiling the whole plan. He either defeated each column in succession or, by crushing one of them, compelled the others to fall back. The second invasion of Virginia, in 1862, was carried out by no less than four different armies, all converging on Richmond, and numbering all told about 200,000 men. The Confederates had but 100,000, but the brilliant strategy of Lee, backed up by the marvellous energy of Jackson, cleared Virginia of invaders within three months. This tendency to discard simplicity in favour of complication appears in the tactics of the Federals as well as in their strategy. Commanders were always trying to imitate Napoleon, forgetting that intricate manœuvres require a well-trained staff

and well-drilled troops; and it is noticeable that the least experienced leaders were generally the most eager to attempt involved movements. Grant seems to have been the first to recognise that, as Moltke puts it, the true objective of a campaign is the defeat of the enemy's main army, although he may be said to have erred on the side of simplicity, and too many of his battles took the shape of frontal attacks against an entrenched enemy. General Sheridan's summing up of the handling of the army of the Potomac, as the army of the east was called, before Grant took command, is to the point. 'The army,' he says, 'was all right; the trouble was that the commanders never went out to lick anybody, but always thought first of keeping from getting licked.' Grant, like Moltke, was always ready to try conclusions.

Perhaps the most interesting strategical question is that connected with bases of operations and lines of communication. Grant was the first to perceive that in a comparatively fertile country it was possible to subsist an army without magazines; and he was able to invest Vicksburg, the Mississippi fortress, by cutting loose from his base, marching completely round the place, defeating the troops that opposed him, and then establishing a new line of communication. In his famous march to the sea Sherman did the same thing. In September he found himself at Atlanta with a Confederate army, inferior in numbers, in front of him, and in October this army passed round his flank and struck his line of communications in rear. But his magazines, depots, and the important bridges were fortified and well garrisoned; the border States, Kentucky and Tennessee, were strongly held; and so on November 15, cutting loose from his communications, he started on his march of 300 miles across Georgia, entering Savannah on December 21. The Confederate army of the west, which he had left in his rear, was heavily defeated at Nashville on December 15 and 16.

I may add that the command of the sea and of the great rivers both in the west and east greatly assisted the Federal generals in their operations, as they assisted General Ross of Bladensburg, in that remarkable campaign which resulted in the capture of Washington by an English army.

In 1864, Grant, with an army 130,000 strong, moved southward against Richmond through Virginia, always keeping his left within reach of the navigable rivers and estuaries which intersect the eastern portion of that State in a direction parallel to the line of march. The district through which he moved was completely exhausted, and he was compelled to rely on his magazines. In fifty days he changed his bases and line of communications no less than four times; a fact which speaks volumes for the efficiency of the Federal departments of supply and transport.

In comparing the broad principles of the strategy of the Federals with those followed by Moltke in 1870, we are at once struck with the complication, the vagueness, and the weakness of the one, as compared with the simplicity, the strength, and the concentrated energy of the other. In 1870 we find a vast army, divided into two groups, disdaining every object except that of concentrating every single available gun, sabre, and bayonet against the main forces of the enemy. Everyone is aware that Moltke's plan of campaign, seemingly so simple, had been most carefully worked out in the winter months of 1867–68. The Federals, on the other hand, not anticipating war, had no such opportunity of thinking out at their leisure the proper line to be followed, and the result was that for the first three years they made but little progress. Now the Federal generals were, as a rule, men of strong common sense, and it is often urged that strategy is merely a question of common sense, but in 1870 we have one of the most earnest students spending four months in evolving a plan of campaign which proved completely successful, and in 1861, '62, and '63, men of undoubted ability, producing and acting upon conceptions of which the most ordinary Sandhurst cadet is able to point out the shortcomings. Common sense made a most conspicuous failure. It is true that the Federal generals were much hampered by the President and his advisers, who never ceased, until the coming of Grant, to interfere with the military operations; but the fact that the ideas of these civilian councillors were almost invariably unsound goes to prove the proposition that for judicious strategy something more is needed than mere

natural intelligence. In General Grant's Memoirs is an anecdote much to the point. When he first took command, he had an interview with the President, Abraham Lincoln. Now Lincoln was undoubtedly one of the very ablest men that America ever produced; he had given advice to every general-in-chief, had received every report, and had naturally followed the course of the war with the most intense interest. Yet mark the following;—'In our interview,' says Grant, 'the President told me he didn't want to know what I proposed to do. But he submitted a plan of campaign of his own which he wanted me to hear and then do as I pleased about it. He brought out a map of Virginia . . . and pointed out on that map two streams which empty into the Potomac, and suggested that the army might be moved on boats and landed between the mouths of these streams. We would then have the Potomac to bring our supplies, and the tributaries would protect our flanks while we moved out. I listened respectfully, but did not suggest that the same streams would protect Lee's flanks while he was shutting us up.'

I think that when we compare the strategy of the American war with that of 1870 we realise the truth of Napoleon's saying: 'Read and meditate on the wars of the greatest captains. This is the only way of learning the science of war.'

Now, as to the tactics of the three arms.

To take the Artillery first. In the first year of the war we find, as we should naturally expect, knowing that the batteries had never had opportunities of working together, that in battle, whether on the defensive or offensive, their action was entirely independent. In 1862, however, came a change. The first symptom was seen at the battle of Malvern Hill, where the Federal army, retreating from before Richmond after a crushing defeat, fought a most successful rearguard action. Its success was due not so much to the strength of the position as to the fact that the chief of artillery had massed nearly 300 guns to meet the attack of the Confederates. This principle of massing guns gradually worked its way to the front, and the last great charge of the Confederates at Gettysburg, in July 1863, was preceded by an artillery duel for nearly two hours,

with 137 guns on one side and about 90 on the other. The ground on which this battle was fought, however, was fairly open. In the forests of Virginia space for the deployment of more than six or seven batteries at most was seldom to be found; in fact there was so little opportunity for its employment, and it was so liable to capture, that, after a few days' campaigning in the Wilderness in 1864, General Grant sent back a large portion of his artillery. Naturally, in such a country, surprise played a most important part in the operations, and one of the Federal generals, Hazen, in his memoirs, speaks somewhat contemptuously of the 'old custom of advertising one's intentions by a cannonade.' He is of course referring to fighting in a very close and intersected country.

Shrapnel was little used in the war, and the guns were far from possessing the killing power of those of the present day; it is, therefore, scarcely worth while speaking at length on the effects of artillery fire on the troops. Generally speaking, the effect, whether moral or physical, was very small. Like all raw troops, in the first year of the war the men appear to have dreaded the artillery a good deal: but when they found that 'masked batteries,' a great bugbear in the earlier days, were very seldom met with, and that the losses inflicted by the artillery were out of all proportion to the noise, contempt seems to have taken the place of apprehension. At all events, neither infantry nor mounted riflemen had the slightest hesitation in charging artillery, and I doubt if any troops ever faced guns with less perturbation of spirit than the Americans.

At Fredericksburg, in December 1863, the Federal army was on one side of the river Rappahannock, on commanding ground; Lee's army on the other, well out of range, but holding the little town of Fredericksburg, on the bank of the stream, with a small brigade. Before crossing the river, the Federal commander determined to clear the town, and bombarded it for nearly an hour with some fifty or sixty guns, including several 20-pounders. 'Although the effect on the buildings was appalling; although flames broke out in many places and the streets were furrowed with round shot, the

defenders not only suffered very little loss, but at the very height of the cannonade easily repelled an attempt on the part of the Federals to cross the river.' The stream was eventually crossed in boats, and the Confederate brigade driven out at the point of the bayonet.

Daring, characteristic of all arms, was very conspicuous in this branch of the service. In the Mexican War of 1846–47, the field artillery had done excellent service, always pushing forward with the fighting line. It had brilliant traditions, and one of the marked features of the Civil War is the almost reckless fashion in which the batteries assisted the attack. They were often to be found in line with the most advanced skirmishers, and rendered the infantry the most effective support. No false shame of losing guns ever kept the battery commanders back when they could do good work at the front, and the greater part of their fighting was done at canister range.

The Southern artillery was much inferior in material; the fuzes were very bad and the ammunition indifferent; but, on the whole, it did remarkably good work. This was due to a more judicious organisation. The artillery officers in General Lee's army were given a much freer hand than in the North. The chief of artillery in each army corps advised his chief on all matters appertaining to his own arm, and all tactical details were left to him and the officers under him. Four batteries formed a battalion, generally attached to an infantry division, but not permanently to any one division in particular, and these battalions were very seldom split up.

In the Northern army, a varying number of batteries were attached to each infantry division; but there was always a disposition to allow the divisional commanders to use their batteries as if they were independent commands, and not as if they constituted only a section of a unit. Chiefs of artillery were considered useless; there were no competent staffs; and, generally speaking, there was an absence of concentrated effort on the part of this arm which greatly minimised its effect. The divisional commanders were accustomed to use their guns without reference to the artillery officers, and hence,

as one of the artillery generals writes, 'idle cannonades were the besetting sin of some of our commanders.'

There are two points connected with the artillery duel which I may notice in passing.

The first has reference to artillery on the offensive.

The Americans appear, like the Germans at Gravelotte and elsewhere, to have generally limited the action of their batteries to merely silencing the enemy's guns; and the preliminary bombardment had often very little effect on the issue of the fight.

Thus, at Gettysburg, of which I have already spoken, the Federal artillery commander, after maintaining a rather unequal contest for nearly a couple of hours, ordered his guns to cease fire. His opponents, as he implies in an account he wrote of the battle, had sufficiently advertised their intentions; and he simply ceased fire to save ammunition for the infantry attack which he knew must follow. The Confederates, believing that they had silenced him altogether, let loose their infantry, on which seventy Federal guns opened at short range with terrible effect. In fact, it was St. Privat anticipated.

The generals on both sides took very good care to keep their infantry either well under cover, or well to the rear, while the artillery duel was going on. During the bombardment, preliminary to the Federal attack on Lee's position at Fredericksburg, I believe that the Confederate front was manned by no more than half a dozen battalions at most. The main army of 80,000 men was hidden in ravines and woods, well out of range. In one of the Wilderness battles, forty Federal guns were engaged for a long time bombarding a line of earthworks from which the garrison had been withdrawn to the shelter of the neighbouring forest.

At Gettysburg the Federal infantry were not withdrawn. They lay in open order, behind slight entrenchments and stone walls. They were not very far in front of their own batteries, and the latter were the Confederate objective. I have looked through the reports in the official records sent in by the infantry regiments. All of them speak of the bombardment, but none of them appear to have lost more than one or two

men from the fire of the guns. When the Confederate infantry advanced, these regiments were unshaken and perfectly ready to do their share of the business.

In fact, the attacking artillery had only carried out the first part of the bombardment; it had silenced the opposing batteries, but it had done nothing whatever towards destroying or demoralising the opposing infantry.

On other occasions the infantry assisted the artillery in the bombardment, and here the infantry of the defence were compelled to show themselves. They could not be withdrawn from their earthworks with an infantry force watching its opportunity not many hundred yards to the front, and gradually creeping up under fire of its own guns. They were obliged to join in the action, and directly they exposed themselves above their entrenchments the artillery took them for its target.

At the battle of Nashville, December 1864, where the Confederate army of the west was finally defeated, the day was won by a smart stroke of combined tactics.

A hill which formed part of the Southern line was strengthened by an earthwork. The Federals massed guns against this point, and sent a brigade across the valley to storm it. 'The fire of these guns,' says the Confederate commander, 'prevented our men from raising their heads above the earthworks, and the enemy's infantry made a sudden and gallant charge up to and over our entrenchments. Our line, thus pierced, gave way; soon after it broke at all points, and I beheld, for the first and only time, a Confederate army abandoning the field in confusion.'

As to the infantry, the battalions on either side, organised in ten companies, used a drill which was more French than English; all movements were very quickly carried through, and much use was made of skirmishers to cover the advance of the line or column. The usual formation for attack was in line, with either two companies per battalion or a battalion per brigade deployed as skirmishers. Attacks in close column were infrequent; and the advance was generally made in successive lines, as was advocated by Skobeleff. In fact, Skobeleff, who,

according to Archibald Forbes, was an earnest student of the American War, seems to have adopted many of his ideas from the practice of the great American generals.

There are not many points of peculiar interest about the infantry tactics.

One of the Federal divisional leaders, General Hazen, complains that there was a singular lack of tactical manœuvring in the war. Many battles, he says, were little more than the posting of lines to give or receive the attack. The men then fought the matter out in their tracks, and the affair ended with a disorderly retreat or a broken and ineffective pursuit. 'This was in part,' he writes, 'due to the too loose moulding of the regiments by drill and discipline, . . . but very largely to the lack of a staff clearly comprehending the situation and needs of the moment.'

It is perhaps more probable that this lack of manœuvring was due to long-range firearms. General Hazen seems to me to be comparing the battles of Lee and Grant with those of Frederick and Napoleon; for the same lack of manœuvring under fire—for this is what he refers to—was just as apparent in 1870, and is a necessary evil of modern fighting. The American advance was made in what were literally successive lines of skirmishers. The men opened out under fire, and abandoned touch of their own accord. It has been said that the Germans, in 1870, adopted extended order because they held the very curious belief that therein lay the royal road to victory. I hold, myself, a very contrary view. I believe that the Germans extended their men because they knew it was impossible to get them to advance in any other formation under the stress of modern fire. And in this opinion I think American soldiers will be found to agree. At all events a veteran of the Civil War, who commanded a famous volunteer regiment, when I asked him whether men could be got to advance shoulder to shoulder in close order under the fire of the breech-loader, gave a most decided negative. 'No,' he said, 'God don't make men who could stand that.'

One of their great generals thus speaks of the Confederate attack. 'Whoever saw a Confederate line advancing that was

not as crooked as a ram's horn? Each ragged rebel yelling on his own hook, and aligning on himself!'

If the attack by successive lines of skirmishers was invented by the Americans, so also was the advance by means of successive rushes. 'The troops,' says the officer just referred to, 'invented the attack by rushes, that is, they fell into the habit of making their attacks that way, because it was the only way to work sensibly.'

The attack of large bodies underwent a marked development during the war. It is curious to find an experienced leader like Sherman, at Bull Run, the first great battle, sending the battalions of his brigade into action successively; when one was beaten another took its place. But Sherman, like many of the others, had to buy his experience in the field. In the earlier period, and indeed generally speaking right through, the traditional English formation of skirmishers, followed by three lines, seems to have been universal; but in the third year there was a tendency to mass troops on a great depth for the assault of the tactical objective. At Gettysburg, after the great artillery duel of which I have already spoken, Lee put in 15,000 men to breach the Federal centre, and, but for some misunderstanding, they would have been followed by 15,000 more. At Chickamauga, two months later, Longstreet formed seven brigades, in column of brigades at half-distance, and in this formation made a successful breach of the Federal lines. At Spottsylvania, in May 1864, Grant massed no less than 30,000 men for the assault of what was afterwards called the 'Bloody Angle,' so fierce was the fighting and so terrible the slaughter round it. The centre of this attack was formed of two divisions in line, and two in column in rear. It was but partially successful. The supports mingled with the first line as they stormed the entrenchments; there was another strong line of earthworks in rear, and here the Federals were roughly checked.

At Chattanooga, in November 1863, Grant carried the centre of the Confederate position, a ridge 500 feet high, with four divisions disposed in three lines.

At Chancellorsville, May 1863, Jackson's famous flank

attack, which rolled up the right wing of the Federal army, was made by 25,000 men, drawn up by divisions in three lines, and covered by skirmishers.

It is important to note that the attacks in which each line was formed of a single division appear to have been far more productive of confusion, and were never so thoroughly successful, as those where each division was drawn up in three lines, as at Chattanooga.

I can do no more than refer very briefly indeed to Lee's great flank attacks, made with every man that he could spare, imitating Frederick the Great, and anticipating the decisive movement of the 12th Corps upon St. Privat. Tactically speaking they were the most brilliant manœuvres of the war.

I have already spoken of the very slight control that the regimental officers exercised over their men when the bullets began to fly. This absence of fire discipline greatly increased the difficulty of supplying ammunition.

'The complaint,' writes General Hazen, 'out of ammunition,' used to be heard from regimental commanders fifty times during a great battle. This was often due 'to want of control over the fire owing to poor drill.' Here he is referring to the infantry, who were armed with muzzle-loaders; and it is an interesting fact that General Lee, owing to the same difficulty of control, was averse from arming his infantry with breech-loaders.

The ammunition was kept in the battalion carts, and the packets carried to the firing line in bags, but the supply, or rather the means of bringing it up, were very often unequal to the demand.

I think that these are circumstances well worth the closest attention of those who may have to deal with unprofessional troops; and that the more we read of the American War, the more we realise the value of steady drill and strict discipline. At one time many of the Federal soldiers in the west threw away their bayonets; and in Sherman's march to the sea the men got rid of their knapsacks, finding it more comfortable to march with their necessaries rolled up in the blankets that were slung round their shoulders.

This very rough description of the American artillery

and infantry shows that their tactics differed little, if at all, from those now in vogue in Europe; but in the tactics adopted by their mounted riflemen we come to what was practically a new feature in modern war. This new departure was due principally to the nature of the country; the mounted arm on either side, at all events in Virginia, was in no sense of the word mounted infantry, that is, soldiers who use the horse merely as a means of locomotion, as transport for their rifles, instead of as the principal and most direct means of defeating their enemy.

The truth is, I believe, that the American mounted regiments, after the first two years, when they had become sufficiently trained, preferred to fight on horseback rather than on foot. But they were accustomed always to adapt their tactics to the ground. If the ground was unsuitable for mounted work they converted themselves into infantry. If they engaged infantry, they fought that infantry with its own weapons so long as it gave them no opening for a charge. And, as a matter of fact, the ground generally compelled them to fight dismounted. The best way, I think, of opening a discussion on the merits and value of this force is to put the question:—Were these mounted riflemen efficient both as infantry and as cavalry? This, I take it, is what we all want to get at. Do the records of the mounted riflemen of America assist us to decide the much-vexed point whether cavalry can be so trained as to work well on foot without impairing their efficiency when mounted? When I use the term 'much-vexed question,' I do not wish to be misunderstood. It has been settled in England by the action of our own authorities in establishing training schools for mounted infantry. But other nations refuse to be convinced. I can, of course, do no more than bring forward certain facts and offer certain suggestions; and I must preface my remarks by saying that, owing to the different conditions of warfare in America from those that obtain in Europe, and the meagre records of their mounted branch, the evidence I shall produce will possibly be insufficient to warrant a verdict either way.

I have already alluded to the efficiency of the American men on the outpost line. But there were two other tactical

operations in which they shone even more conspicuously. One is the 'raid'; those extraordinary enterprises which did so much harm to the enemy's communications, and so completely thwarted and disordered his manœuvres. The other is the delaying power possessed by the mounted arm; the manner in which the cavalry and horse artillery alone were able to check for many hours the advance of the enemy's infantry or artillery, or to hold that infantry and artillery fast until reinforcements arrived. Every soldier knows that the American mounted riflemen possessed a most remarkable strategical independence; and, as Sir George Chesney, with these riflemen in his mind, long ago asserted, '30,000 such horsemen would, if handled boldly, wholly cripple and confound an opposing army of 300,000! Riding to and fro in rear of an army, intercepting its communications, cutting off its supplies, destroying its reserve ammunition and material, such a force would undoubtedly create panic and confusion far and wide.' That all cavalry should possess this measure of strategical independence we are probably all agreed. The question is, can it be done? The reply is, certainly, if the mounted arm can fight equally well mounted and on foot; if it combine, as did the American horse, shock and fire-action.

Now, I will try to explain, in as few words as possible, the standard of efficiency reached by Stuart's and Sheridan's mounted men. First as infantry. I do not think that anyone dare assert that their best mounted regiments, when fighting on foot, were anything like so efficient as the ordinary infantry. Read Sheridan's account of the battles of Five Forks and Sailor's Creek, where his command gained its brightest laurels, and you will observe a note of triumph when he writes that his dismounted cavalry were able to hold their own against the Confederate infantry. These battles occurred at the very end of the war, and I believe that it was not till that time, four years after the war began, that the cavalry fancied themselves anything like a match for the infantry. And, at the same time, we must always bear in mind that the cavalry were armed with breech-loading and repeating carbines, the opposing infantry with muzzle-loaders. This last is a most

important point, and was, of course, all in favour of the cavalry. 'The difference,' writes Stuart's Adjutant-General, 'between a Spencer carbine and an Enfield rifle is by no means a mere matter of sentiment.' This evidence refers to the eastern theatre of the war. A single extract will show, I think, that at the same period the infantry in the west had very little dread of the trooper on foot. Writing of the last great battle in the west, Nashville, a Federal staff officer, describing the advance of the Confederates, writes, 'Bradley was assailed by a force which the men declared fought too well for dismounted cavalry.' This shows the estimation they were held in in the west, and I think we are justified in believing that the cavalry, notwithstanding their superiority of armament, were only fair infantry.

Secondly, were they good cavalry? Let us divide the battle duties of cavalry into the attack on infantry and artillery, and the attack on cavalry. Now it seems to me that these two duties require very different qualifications, and that the latter is by far the more difficult. Indifferent cavalry, so long as the men ride well and their hearts are in the right place, can charge successfully even good infantry and artillery, if surprised or demoralised; but the same troops, were they to meet good European cavalry on a fair field, would be nowhere. Now the American cavalry had never much hesitation in charging guns; and in the last year of the war, when Sheridan came to the front, they were just as capable of charging infantry as either the French or Germans in 1870. I believe that there were many brigades in both the Federal and Confederate armies who would have charged just as gallantly, and possibly just as far, as did von Bredow at Mars-la-Tour; but whether, in a country far more open than their own, they could have met the German cavalry of that date with any hope of success, or whether they could have done all that the Germans of to-day anticipate may be done by enormous masses skilfully manœuvred, is a very different question, the solution of which is beset by many difficulties. In the first place, we are all aware that it takes a long time to train cavalry to manœuvre in mass with speed and cohesion; and, also, that without manœuvring capacity you can scarcely hope for success against hostile cavalry thoroughly

well trained; nor, without high manœuvring capacity, would enormous masses achieve against infantry the results anticipated in future wars by the Germans.

Now I ask whether it is likely that either the Federals or Confederates, beginning with men and horses absolutely untrained (except in so far that the Southerners all rode well), and with only a few senior officers, and fewer non-commissioned officers, who knew anything of their work, should have been able to acquire, during incessant active service, great manœuvring capacity. We know that the thorough training of the horses has much to do with the efficiency of the German cavalry. It is impossible that the Americans, who had no establishments of trained horses to fall back upon, no depots at which to train the remounts, and who had to supply casualties with horses unseasoned and impressed straight from the farm, should have been able to approach European cavalry in mechanical perfection of movement. And yet from this mechanical perfection come rapidity of manœuvre and cohesion. The two qualities are absolutely essential to success in a cavalry engagement. Again, there was want of discipline. To quote a Lieutenant-General of the Confederate army: 'The difficulty of converting raw men into soldiers is enhanced manifold when they are mounted. Both man and horse require training. . . . There was but little time, and it may be said less disposition, to establish camps of instruction. Living on horseback, fearless and dashing, the men of the South afforded the best possible material for cavalry. They had every quality but discipline. . . . Assuredly our cavalry rendered much excellent service, especially when dismounted and fighting as infantry. Able officers, such as Stuart, Hampton, &c. &c. developed much talent for war; but their achievement, however distinguished, fell far below the standard that would have been reached had not want of discipline impaired their efforts and those of their men.'

However, these are but opinions; and I will now give as a practical illustration, a sketch of the most famous cavalry battle of the war, that of Brandy Station, fought in Virginia on June 10, 1863. I may say, first of all, that before this

engagement there had been plenty of hand-to-hand fighting and cavalry charges, but the charges were made in column of sections down the roads.

On June 9, 1863, the Confederate cavalry, under Stuart, was stationed near Brandy Station, in Virginia. The Federals were on the other side of the river Rappahannock, the numerous fords being held by the Confederate pickets. Stuart had ordered his division, of seven brigades, about 10,000 strong, to march at an early hour; but at the very earliest dawn, the Federal cavalry, under General Pleasonton, consisting of three small cavalry divisions with infantry supports, and also about 10,000 strong, crossed the Rappahannock in two columns, with the intention of reconnoitring towards Culpeper Court House. The right column crossed at Beverly's, the left at Kelly's Ford, about five and a half miles lower down the stream.

We will take the right column first. It had some difficulty in dislodging the Confederate picket and support, and here there was a good deal of hand-to-hand fighting on a narrow road. Eventually the Confederates, who formed part of General Jones' brigade, were pushed back to St. James' Church, where they found three of their brigades drawn up in position, dismounted, under cover of stone walls, forming the front line, with mounted regiments on the flanks. The Federals dismounted and attacked the left wing of this position; but they were repulsed, and charged, it is said, by cavalry. But whether there was any hand-to-hand fighting at this point there is no evidence to show. On the Federals falling back the Confederates advanced; and it seems that for several hours there was a great deal of skirmishing, relieved by a dashing charge of Federal cavalry. This was made by the 6th United States (regulars). 'It was made,' says an eyewitness, 'over a plateau fully 800 yards wide, and its objective point was the artillery at the church. Never rode troopers more gallantly than did those steady regulars, as, under a fire of shell and shrapnel and finally of canister, they dashed up to the very muzzles, then through and beyond our guns. Here they were simultaneously attacked from both flanks and the survivors driven back.'

Now for the left Federal column. It crossed the river with-

out difficulty, and then divided into two columns, two divisions advancing on Brandy Station, the other on Culpeper. Eluding a Confederate brigade, which had come up to support the picket at the ford, the two columns moved forward. The first was soon seen by the Confederate scouts to be moving directly on Brandy Station, and when reported was visible from Fleetwood Hill and was actually in rear of the Confederate lines engaged beyond St. James' Church. Fleetwood Hill, although nothing more than a gentle undulation, commanded the whole of the neighbouring country. Stuart was at the front; but he had left his Adjutant-General on the hill, having selected it as his headquarters during the action, and this officer, who had a single howitzer with him, but no troops beyond a small escort, opened fire on the Federal column and sent an urgent report to Stuart. The Federals halted and their horse artillery came into action. Stuart, on receiving the message, sent back a couple of regiments from the centre of his line to Fleetwood Hill. 'The emergency was so pressing,' writes the Adjutant-General, 'that the leading regiment had no time to deploy. It reached the top of the hill just as the single piece of artillery was retiring. Not fifty yards below a Federal regiment was advancing in magnificent order, in column of squadrons. A hard gallop had enabled only the leading files of the 12th Virginia (a Confederate regiment) to reach the top of the hill, the rest stretching out behind in column of sections. With the true spirit of a forlorn hope the colonel and a few men dashed at the advancing Federals, but did not check their advance. The other Confederate regiment now came up, but so disordered by their rapid gallop that after the first shock they recoiled and retired to re-form.' This left the Federal regiment in possession of the hill; the two Confederate regiments, having re-formed, again charged and drove them back for a time, but eventually had to retire leaving the Federals masters of the situation. Two squadrons, passing round the west side of the hill, charged the Federal horse artillery, which had advanced to its foot. The cavalry escort was dispersed, but the gunners fought splendidly, and the Southerners were unable to carry off the guns. The officer

commanding the Federal battery reports that he was 'surrounded by a squad of rebel cavalry, firing with carbine and pistol.' By this time Stuart and the greater portion of his force was on his way back to Fleetwood Hill. One regiment from the right of the line led the advance, and, moving towards Brandy Station, was ordered by Stuart to charge a Federal force, the main body of the column, near the Miller House. The enemy appear to have been surprised by this attack, and were retiring slowly at the time. The attack was successful, and the squadrons even rode through a section of artillery; but the Federals re-formed, charged the Confederate regiment with far superior numbers, and drove it back. The Confederate charge—the regiment was but 200 strong—was made in line. By this time, the whole of the right wing of Stuart's first line, consisting of four regiments, was retiring on Fleetwood Hill, the whole force in column of squadrons.

Two of his regiments appear to have moved straight on Fleetwood Hill, which was now in possession of the Federals. The colonel of the leading regiment reports: 'I immediately ordered the charge in close column of squadrons, and swept the hill clear of the enemy, he being scattered and entirely routed.' The regiment in first line, according to Stuart's Adjutant-General, used the sabre alone, but it does not appear that the opposing cavalry rode out to meet the charge.

The two remaining regiments diverged to the left, passed the eastern end of the hill, and encountered the enemy, who had not long before driven back the first Confederate regiment. 'This charge,' says an officer present, 'was as gallantly made and gallantly met as any the writer ever witnessed during nearly four years of active service. Taking into estimation the number of men who crossed sabres in this single charge (being nearly a brigade on both sides), it was by far the most important hand-to-hand contest between the cavalry of the two armies. As the blue and grey riders mixed in the smoke and dust, minutes seemed to elapse before its effect was determined. At last the intermixed and disorganised mass began to recede, and we saw that the field was won by the Confederates.

After this the Federals abandoned this quarter of the field, and a portion of their force which held the railway station was driven out by the charge of a fresh Virginia regiment, sent in by Stuart. The enemy then fell back to join that portion of his force which still remained near St. James' Church, having re-formed without molestation on the ground from which he had originally advanced.

It is noticeable that Stuart, on falling back in the first instance to Fleetwood Hill, was not followed by the enemy with whom he had been hitherto engaged.

American writers attribute the failure of the Federals to follow him to the position held by the Confederate brigade about Cunningham Farm, within striking distance of the road by which the Federals had advanced from Beverly's Ford.

But this Confederate brigade, with its right flank exposed, was withdrawn, without molestation, to the hills overlooking Thompson's House; and Stuart's line now extended along these hills, but with a gap between the extreme left and the river.

The efforts made by the Federals to penetrate through this gap and get round Stuart's rear led to some more cavalry fighting. A brisk dismounted skirmish was followed by the charge of two Federal regiments. This was met by the 9th Virginia, which seems to have broken the attack and driven its assailants back across a stone wall. The 9th was then attacked in flank by a fresh regiment, and was driven back in turn; but being reinforced by the 10th and 13th regiments, it again advanced, and the tide of battle was finally turned against the Federals. Whether the sabre was used in these charges or in what formation they were made does not appear. They are but little noticed by writers on the war. A Confederate brigade now came up from Oakshade to fill the gap, and after a short dismounted action the Northerners retired across the Rappahannock. 'No serious effort,' says Stuart's Adjutant-General, 'was made to impede their withdrawal'; but we may remember that the Federals had a small brigade of infantry present. While the main bodies had been engaged at Fleetwood Hill, two Confederate regiments had cut in across the line of march of the Federal

division, making for Culpeper, and occupied a strong position on thickly wooded rising ground just east of Stevensburg. The fighting was principally dismounted; but on one of his regiments being caught changing formation, when mounted, on a narrow road, and dispersed by a charge in column of sections, the officer commanding the Confederates withdrew to Mountain Run, covering the road to Brandy Station. The Federal division was almost immediately recalled across the Rappahannock.

The Confederates, out of a total of 10,300, lost 523 officers and men. The Federals, out of 10,980, lost 936, including 486 prisoners and 3 guns.

Owing to some misunderstanding, the Confederate brigade, near Kelly's Ford, remained in that position all the morning and took no part in the engagement.

The action, from the time the Federals crossed the river to when they recrossed it at Beverly's Ford, seems to have lasted about eight hours.

Another important engagement was that at Gettysburg, where the two cavalries came together on the right flank of the Federal position. Here, again, the only important charge of the day was made by two small brigades, numbering probably not more than 800 men apiece, in column of squadrons. Met by a regiment, also in close column of squadrons, in front, and attacked by several small parties in flank, this charge was beaten back.

To show how very far removed the cavalry fighting was from European ideas, I may mention that the charge of a Virginian regiment, which a Northern writer, in the 'Century Magazine,' records as the most determined and vigorous he ever saw, was made against a stone wall, on the other side of which was a Federal regiment, and hand-to-hand fighting, naturally with the pistol and carbine, took place across this barrier.

These were the most important instances of cavalry fighting; and, in my very humble opinion, it does not appear that, as a mounted force, so far as shock-action goes, the American cavalry came near the European standard. To sum up, my impression is—I give it for what it is worth—that they could

charge infantry when surprised or demoralised; that they fought well on foot, but were not equal to well-trained infantry; and that, as cavalry, they were deficient in manœuvring power and in cohesion.

It is true that, in October 1864, Sheridan's cavalry, in the more open district of the Shenandoah Valley, did extraordinary execution, and combined with the infantry in a manner which makes his victories models of tactical skill. But his enemy was far inferior in numbers; and whilst the infantry attacked them in front, the cavalry was free to manœuvre at leisure against their flanks and rear. Unfortunately, no account of his campaign with which I am acquainted goes sufficiently into the details of the cavalry fighting. All considerations as to formations, pace, time, and distance are unnoticed.

However, as regards cavalry *versus* cavalry, I have given a sketch of what are considered the most important engagements of the war; and I must leave it to my readers to decide whether the action at Brandy Station, with its single charge in mass, and that in close column of squadrons, like Stuart's, at Gettysburg, indicate a capacity for manœuvring or a knowledge of purely cavalry tactics such as would have fitted the American horseman to cope in the open with good cavalry on the European model. I may add that at the battle of Winchester, October 1864, where Sheridan's cavalry so much distinguished itself, the charges against the Confederate infantry were again made in close column of squadrons, and I think it is a fair presumption that this was the usual formation whenever the cavalry were employed mounted in mass.

At the same time, no troops could have been better adapted to the country over which they fought than the American mounted riflemen; no troops ever showed greater pluck; on the outposts they were exceedingly efficient; their strategical independence was great, and, as I have already said, on their own ground they would probably have defeated any European cavalry of the period. Naturally, as they never had to meet cavalry trained to shock-action only, their leaders made no attempt, in this respect, to bring their men up to the European standard.

Thus I may say that the achievements of our brethren in arms across the Atlantic teach us what may be done by a mounted force that is not much inferior to good infantry, and at the same time has all the mobility of cavalry. Such a force may yet rival the deeds of Sheridan and Stuart in the days to come. But whether that force is to be composed of cavalry alone or of cavalry accompanied by mounted infantry, and whether cavalry can be trained to hold its own on foot without losing something of its dash and daring, are points which, when we take into consideration the deficient training of the mounted forces, the history of the American war does not decide for us. That history, however, shows us one thing, and this is, that if you are going to make great raids on your adversary's communications, to destroy his magazines, and defeat his isolated detachments, or if you intend even to hold his infantry in check with your mounted men alone, your cavalry, when dismounted, must be able to shoot, to manœuvre, and to attack just as well as infantry.

A sketch of one of these raids will not be out of place here. In March 1865, General Wilson, with some 14,000 cavalry, marched across Alabama and Georgia. He was opposed by General Forrest with 10,000 cavalry, and the important towns were garrisoned by infantry. He marched in thirty days nearly 600 miles, captured three important cities, two of which were protected by very strong entrenchments—which were stormed —and garrisoned, one of them with 7,000 and another with 2,700 men; he crossed six large rivers, fought five battles, destroyed railroads, iron foundries, and factories, and captured 6,000 prisoners and 156 guns. 'In this campaign,' says General Michie, of the Federal army, 'the cavalry, armed with the Spencer (repeating carbine), acted mostly as mounted infantry.'

If your cavalry can be trained to shoot, to manœuvre, and to attack as infantry, and, at the same time, to manœuvre well mounted in mass, and if your officers can double the part, or, to paraphrase Mrs. Malaprop, 'become two gentlemen at once'—the dashing dragoon and the smart light-infantryman—then there is little need for mounted infantry in European warfare.

I think one of the most interesting points connected with the American cavalry is its organisation and working when covering the march or cantonments of the armies, and perhaps a few notes on this subject may induce others, better qualified than I am, to study the manner in which the duties of the cavalry screen were carried out.

At first the Confederates had it all their own way. Not only were they better mounted and more expert horsemen, but the regiments were organised, as early as 1861, in what was practically an independent cavalry division. In the Peninsular campaign of 1862, the Federals possessed the same organisation; but in Pope's campaign, and in the Fredericksburg campaign, in the summer and winter of the same year, the Northern cavalry was attached by brigades to the army corps. In the Maryland campaign, September 1862, the divisional organisation was resorted to, but merely as a temporary measure, and the hastily collected force, like the division in the Peninsula, lacked the cohesion and efficiency which the Confederate division had acquired by long association.

In every one of these campaigns, the superiority of the Southern horsemen, in every branch of tactics, was remarkable. Twice Stuart's division made a complete circuit of the Federal army, and on another occasion rode right into the midst of their cantonments, carrying back as a trophy the commander-in-chief's best uniform.

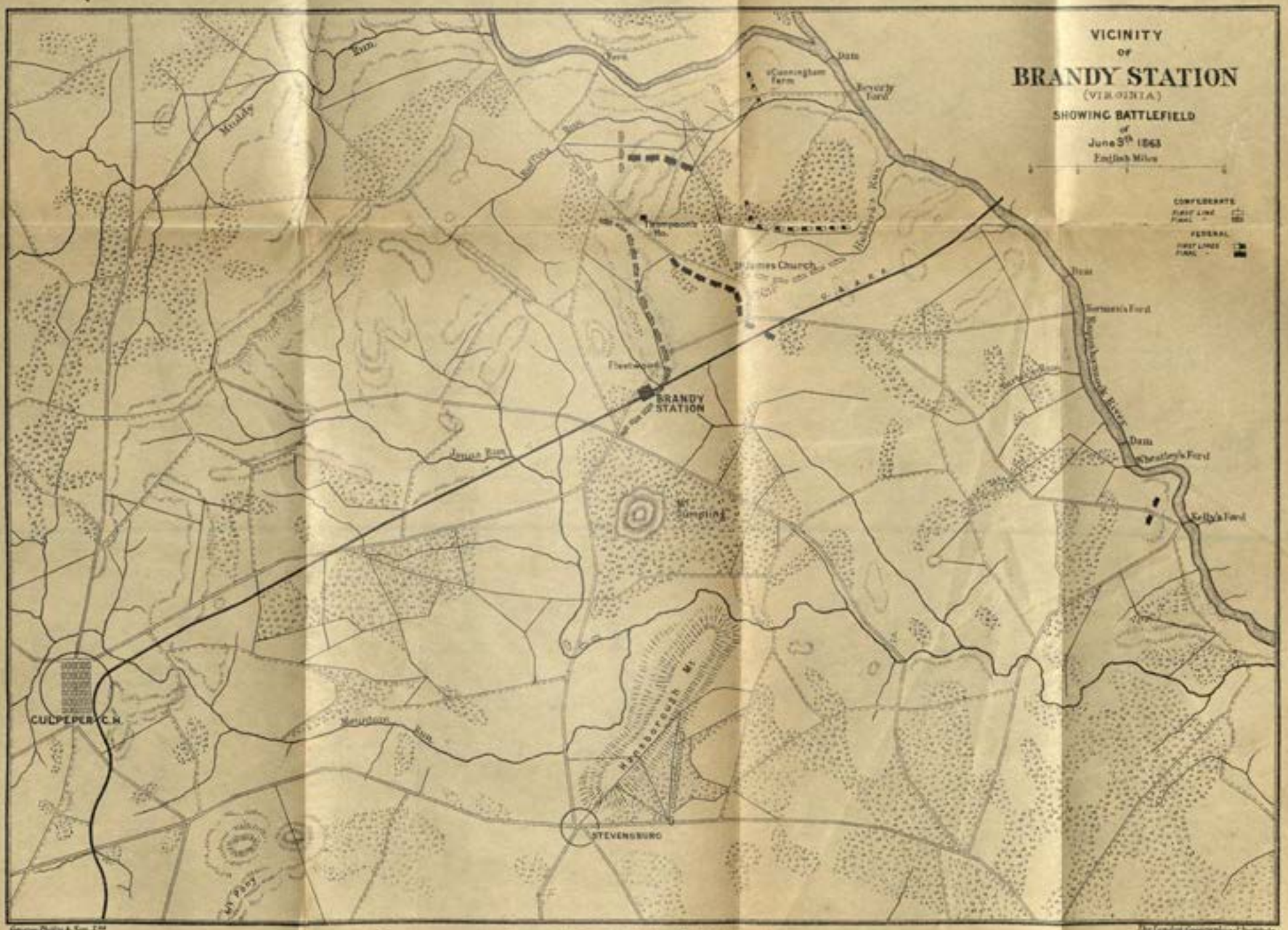
But in 1863 came a change. General Hooker reverted to the divisional organisation, and his cavalry had several months in which to learn its duties as a single unit under a single hand. From this time forth the mounted arms met on terms of equality; and if the earlier campaigns, like that of 1870, show us not only the value of cavalry well organised and well led, but the helplessness of an army whose cavalry is wanting in cohesion, the later campaigns give us many hints as to the working of the independent divisions. At Chancellorsville Hooker made a fatal mistake. As he moved off his army to attack Lee, he sent nearly the whole of his cavalry to cut his opponent's communications. In the battle which ensued he had with him but one weak brigade; and it is not too much

to say, that the surprise and rout of his right wing, and his subsequent retreat, were due to his deficiency in mounted regiments.

Gettysburg, from a cavalry point of view, is perhaps the most interesting campaign of the whole series; and we find here a new feature. The cavalry on both sides was practically divided into two lines, of which the first undertook independent enterprises or endeavoured to bring into action the main body of the hostile horsemen, whilst the second covered the march of the army. This practice obtained during the remainder of the war, and it is remarkable how the two fighting lines continually came into contact, almost every phase of the Gettysburg and the Wilderness campaigns being signalised by some important engagement. In the former the division into two bodies of the Confederate cavalry had the most prejudicial effect. It seems to me that, when the first line under Stuart cut loose from the rest of the army, neither the Confederate staff nor the cavalry leaders in charge of the second line had as yet fully grasped that there is no connection whatever between an independent enterprise and the duty of screening the march; in fact, that it is impracticable to combine the tasks of 'exploration' and 'security.' The Federals worked in very different fashion, and their second line of cavalry, exceedingly well handled, practically decided the issue of the conflict.

One last remark as to the mounted branch of the American armies. From the very outset the Confederate cavalry, untrained as they were, but excellent riders, knowing the country thoroughly, and patriotic and intelligent, did most efficient work upon the outpost line; and I think it is a fair deduction that our own Volunteer cavalry—the Yeomanry—in case of invasion, would, in this respect, prove equally valuable. Nor can I imagine for that force, taking the Confederate troopers as their model, a more honourable and useful rôle than that of mounted riflemen. England is a country which affords even fewer opportunities for purely cavalry combats than Virginia.

It is impossible here to touch on that most interesting of



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all questions, combined tactics; but I may note one or two points. As with other nations, the Americans seem to have had little difficulty in bringing infantry and artillery into proper adjustment; but, with one single exception, their generals seem to have been unequal to the task of handling the three arms together on the field of battle. The single exception was Sheridan; and his operations, both in the Shenandoah Valley and during 'the last agony' of the Confederacy, are well worth the very closest study.

It is impossible that any soldier should not find the memoirs of such great generals as Lee, Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Stuart, and many others, most interesting and instructive reading; and in the, unfortunately, rather cumbersome volumes of the 'Battles and Leaders of the Civil War' we have a work which far surpasses any military history that has yet been written. In these books the history of the war may best be studied. There is nothing in them to repel. There is nothing dry. There is romance and sensation enough and to spare; and if we gain nothing else from them, we can at least learn to appreciate the splendid fighting qualities of the American soldier.

CHAPTER X

THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

(July 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, 1863)

In the first week in May 1863, General Robert Lee, in command of the Confederate army of Northern Virginia, protecting the approaches to Richmond, the Confederate capital, from the north, had, at Chancellorsville, a few miles south of the river Rappahannock, very decisively defeated a Federal army of invasion more than double his numbers.

This was the third attempt at invasion he had thwarted since the war began, just two years previously; and although his losses at Chancellorsville made it impossible for him to pursue his enemy immediately after the battle, he nevertheless determined, when the Federal army fell back discomfited to Falmouth, beyond the river, to carry the war across the Potomac, the boundary stream between North and South, into the Federal territory. Two causes impelled him to an offensive policy. First: Virginia, at no time a rich country, had become almost exhausted by the war, and both the army and the non-combatant population were much straitened for food and supplies. Second: far away in the west, on the river Mississippi, a Federal army was investing Vicksburg, the most important fortress in the South, whose loss would be an irretrievable disaster. He believed it possible that, by threatening Washington, the Federal capital, and the great cities of Pennsylvania, he might induce the Northern President to withdraw the army besieging Vicksburg in order to prevent the Confederates moving with fire and sword through the rich and untouched States of the North. Third: the Federal army, after its recent severe defeat, following on so many successive disasters, was not likely to be strong as regards *moral*, whilst the spirit of the army of

Northern Virginia, after so many victories, was correspondingly high.

His plan of campaign was as follows:—To use the covered approach of the Shenandoah Valley, and its continuation north of the Potomac, the Cumberland Valley, as his line of invasion; to threaten Washington; to defeat the Federal army in a pitched battle; to bring about, if possible, the fall of the Northern capital, and at least to create an important diversion in favour of Vicksburg. Before his operations began, he pointed out Gettysburg as the best point for a battle, as it was so situated that, by holding the passes of South Mountain, he would be able to keep open his line of communication through the Cumberland and Shenandoah Valleys.

At the beginning of June, his army, consisting of 57,000 infantry, 250 guns, and 9,000 cavalry, in all 70,000 men, was at Fredericksburg, watching the Federal army of 105,000 men, with 300 guns, under General Hooker, at Falmouth, on the opposite bank of the Rappahannock.

The first step was to remove his troops from Fredericksburg to the Shenandoah Valley; and although the Rappahannock is a broad stream, this movement involved that very dangerous operation, a flank march across the enemy's front.

Now it is by no means sufficient for a student of war to be made aware that a flank march is risky, but what he ought to learn is how to minimise the risk and to escape the danger, for success in war is won by facing danger and not by running away from it. This is one of the great uses of military history. It teaches us, from the experience of the great masters of war, how movements which may be mathematically demonstrated to be vicious, and yet are sometimes absolutely essential to success, may be successfully executed.

The first thing that Lee had to look to was to prevent all information from reaching the enemy. This was provided for by his 9,000 cavalry, who carefully picketed the whole line of the Rappahannock.

Next, he had to remove his troops secretly, and to keep his enemy in ignorance of this movement as long as possible. Now, as the heights at Falmouth looked down upon Fredericksburg

this was somewhat difficult. Fortunately the great Virginian forest was very close at hand. Very few of the Confederate camps were visible to the Federal scouts and sentries; the remainder were hidden in the woods.

The third step was to induce General Hooker to march north; thus preventing him, whilst the Confederates were marching into Pennsylvania, from making a dash on Richmond, which was very inadequately defended; and also bringing him out from his strong position and compelling him either to attack the Confederates, or to give them the opportunity of defeating him in detail.

The Confederate army was divided into three army corps, commanded by Generals Longstreet, Ewell, and Hill. On June 2, Ewell's corps, covered from observation by the forest, and screened by the cavalry, marched to Culpeper Court House. Longstreet's corps followed on the 4th. Hill remained at Fredericksburg, in order to induce Hooker to believe that the army was still in position at that point.

It was not till June 10 that Hooker learned what was going on. He immediately extended his line along the Rappahannock, his right resting at Bealeton, north of Culpeper. Hill was still at Fredericksburg. On the 9th the Federal cavalry, three divisions, had driven in the Confederate pickets, crossed the Rappahannock, and encountered Stuart's cavalry, at Brandy Station. An indecisive engagement resulted. But Hooker discovered that a large part of the Confederate army was at Culpeper, and determined to reinforce his right. On the same day, Ewell was sent into the Shenandoah Valley, to capture Winchester, and to create the impression that a flank movement against Washington, an operation which Lee had made most effective use of on three previous occasions, was in contemplation.

On June 12, Hill was still at Fredericksburg with his 20,000. Within reach, on the opposite side of the Rappahannock, were no less than five Federal *corps d'armée*, numbering 70,000 men. Further to the right, opposite Chancellorsville, was another Federal corps of 15,000 men; and still further, yet another, round Bealeton, facing Longstreet's 20,000 at

Culpeper. Ewell had reached Front Royal. Thus the three Confederate corps were each forty miles apart, and opposite the space between Hill and Longstreet were massed, on a front of some thirty-five miles, 100,000 Federals. According to all the rules of war, Hooker ought to have been easily able to deal with Hill and Longstreet in detail, for a march of fifteen miles, at furthest, would have placed him between them in overwhelming force. He had quite enough information to make it clear what an excellent opportunity the apparent rashness of the Confederates had given him, and he sent back to Washington for permission to cross the Rappahannock, defeat Hill, and move rapidly on Richmond.

He was refused; and ordered instead to defend the approaches to Washington.

And Lee knew that he would be refused, and this was the secret of the seemingly foolhardy position in which the Confederate army was distributed in face of superior numbers.

How had he come to be possessed of this information? It was not through his cavalry patrols, not through prisoners, not through his spies; but through his knowledge of the character of the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern armies. He knew well what apparent risk he might run with absolute impunity. He knew that the superior numbers of his adversary, and his own dangerous position, were factors in the problem of but small account. He knew that in war moral means, according to Napoleon, are three times more effective than physical means, that is, than numbers, armament, and position; and it was on the former that he now relied.

War is more of a struggle between two human intelligences than between two masses of armed men; and the great general does not give his first attention to numbers, to armament, or to position. He looks beyond these, beyond his own troops, and across the enemy's lines, without stopping to estimate their strength or to examine the ground, until he comes to the quarters occupied by the enemy's leader; and then he puts himself in that leader's place, and with that officer's eyes and mind he looks at the situation; he realises his weakness, tactical, strategical, and political; he detects the points for the security

of which he is most apprehensive; he considers what his action will be if he is attacked here or threatened there, and he thus learns for himself, looking at things from his enemy's point of view, whether or no apparent risks are not absolutely safe.

This is what Lee had done before he ventured on distributing his army corps along so wide a front. He looked beyond his own army, beyond the enemy's camps, beyond the tent of their commander—the man who was eager to profit by the opportunity he offered him—and across the great river which divides Virginia from the North. Over the river he saw Washington and the President's house, and in the President's chair sat a man called Abraham Lincoln, by virtue of his office, civilian though he was, Commander-in-Chief of the Federal armies, and the motive power of the forces which Hooker commanded in Virginia. It was this motive power that Lee attacked. It was against this man that he fought, and not against the masses on the Rappahannock. He knew well that political necessities were Lincoln's chief preoccupation. He knew his apprehensions for the safety of the Union capital. He knew that a threat against Washington was an infallible specific—he had tried it already—for making the enemy divide his enormous forces, detach whole army corps for service round the city, and for compelling his armies to withdraw from Virginia, whether they were badly beaten or not. So, when he sent Ewell to the Shenandoah Valley, an advance from which, as is evident from the map, would threaten the communications of Washington with the more northern States, he was morally certain that Lincoln, the motive power of Hooker's army, would draw that army back to protect Washington instead of pushing it forward against Hill.

In exact accordance with this anticipation, Hooker fell back on the night of the 13th, and changing front to the right, occupied Leesburg, and the passes of the Bull Run mountains.

The whole Confederate army now crossed the Blue Ridge, Stuart, with the cavalry, remaining in rear to watch the enemy and to block the passes. On the 23rd began the passage of the Potomac.

Hooker, at Leesburg, covered the fords of the Potomac north of that town, and threatened the flank of the Confederate advance. On the 25th he heard that Lee had crossed the river near Letown, and immediately followed suit, intending to operate against the enemy's rear. The President, however, objected to the plan of campaign, and the general asked to be relieved of his command. He was succeeded by Meade, like Lee, an officer of the United States corps of Engineers, who took over his new duties on June 28, and moved the army immediately on Frederick. Lee's advanced guard had by this time reached Carlisle and York, and was threatening Harrisburg. Meade, moving rapidly northward, resolved to force Lee to battle before he could cross the Susquehanna river.

We have now to deal with a certain resolution of General Lee's which had a very startling effect on the campaign.

On June 23, on the day on which the passage of the Potomac began, General Lee gave his cavalry commander, Stuart, who up till that time had been guarding the Blue Ridge gaps against the Federal cavalry, permission to move round the rear of the Federal army, then at and about Leesburg, to cross the river, and doing what damage he could to join the advanced guard of the Confederates near the Susquehanna. He was to employ three brigades, leaving two brigades behind, which were to watch the Blue Ridge passes until the infantry was on Northern soil, and then to join the army. Of the two remaining cavalry brigades, one was with the advanced guard, the other well away on the left flank, on the far side of the Cumberland Valley.

Now Stuart had been in the habit, in former campaigns, of taking his division for a trip round the enemy's army, cutting their communications and acquiring information. It does not appear that great good invariably resulted from these enterprises. The American railways, if easily destroyed, were just as easily repaired, and merely riding across the enemy's communications is a very different thing to placing an army astride or on the flank of his communications. The latter course almost invariably compels him to turn back on the intruder; the former inflicts but temporary discomfort. Still

Stuart had always been successful in these raids; by his extraordinary energy, activity, and tactical skill, he had won Lee's confidence, and his superior seems to have acquiesced without question in the suggestion that, with the larger half of his command, his trusted cavalry leader should separate himself from the rest of the army at a critical time.

That the cavalry did do a certain amount of damage in this raid is true; but it may be doubted whether they delayed the northward march of the Federal army for a single hour; and, owing to the fact that Hooker crossed the Potomac sooner than either Stuart or Lee expected, instead of crossing the river two days in advance of the Federals, they did so two days behind them, and did not join the advanced guard until July 3, with both men and horses much exhausted.

Meanwhile the two brigades of horsemen left behind proved insufficient to keep a watch on Hooker and to break through his cavalry screen.

Stuart marched on the 24th. On the night of the 25th Hooker began to move from Leesburg. But it was not till the night of the 28th that Lee was made aware, by a spy, that the Federals had crossed the Potomac. Believing that their army was still south of the river, he had allowed his army corps to move in very open order.

On the 28th, Ewell's corps reached Carlisle and York; the other two were near Chambersburg, from thirty to fifty miles in rear.

On the night of the 28th, hearing the Federal advance, Lee immediately called up the two brigades of cavalry from the Shenandoah Valley, about fifty miles distant, and ordered his army to concentrate at Cashtown, nine miles west of Gettysburg.

The important circumstance to notice is, that from the time the Confederate infantry crossed the Potomac until after the battle of Gettysburg had been fought and lost, Lee had not a single cavalry soldier between himself and the enemy. For nearly four days he remained in ignorance of the Federal movements; he did not know that their army had crossed the river, and he had consequently allowed his three corps to

separate so far that it took four days to effect their concentration.

On the 30th, Hill reached Cashtown, and the rest of the army was not more than fifteen miles distant. The leader of his advanced guard sent a brigade on to Gettysburg to procure a supply of boots, and this brigade returned with the information that the town was occupied by the enemy.

In nearly every book on tactics we have instances of the great use of cavalry in screening the front and reconnoitring. At Gettysburg we have an instance of this screen being altogether absent; and I think the difficulties of the general, arising from this absence, will illustrate how completely the other arms are paralysed without the aid of the cavalry.

That very afternoon a Federal cavalry division under General Buford, scouting far ahead of the army, had entered Gettysburg. This division, all told, did not exceed 4,000 men, and the nearest infantry support was over fifteen miles distant.

Now Gettysburg was important in two ways. It was tactically a strong position, commanding the approaches from the west and north, and it was strategically most important, for it was the nucleus of several good roads, leading to the Susquehanna and the Potomac, to Philadelphia, Baltimore, Frederick, and Washington. The Federals, then, were most fortunate in anticipating the Southerners in the occupation of this point of vantage.

I use advisedly the term 'fortunate,' for on the morning of the 30th, the greater part of two Confederate army corps were within nine miles of Gettysburg, Hill at Cashtown, and Ewell, returning from York, at Heidlersburg, on the opposite side of the town; and by making a little haste, either or both of these corps would have been firmly established on the heights of Gettysburg before the Federal advanced guard arrived. Had the Confederate cavalry been present, scouring the country to the front, the enemy's approach would have been reported, and measures might have been taken to anticipate him in securing this important point.

This, then, was the first untoward circumstance which arose

from the absence of all reconnaissance. It was followed by others.

On the morning of the same day, Hill, as I have said, had sent a brigade, probably not less than 2,000 strong, to get supplies at Gettysburg. The Brigadier, as he neared the town, saw a Federal force advancing to meet him. This force consisted only of cavalry, Buford's division, and as the strongest of its three brigades had been detached to Mechanicstown, it did not number more than 2,000 men and a couple of horse artillery batteries.

Had the advance of the Confederate brigade been covered by cavalry, in all probability the strength and composition of the enemy's force, and also whether it was supported, would have been ascertained; and the Brigadier would have been free to contest with the cavalry the possession of the Gettysburg position, or at least to have sent back reliable information.

What followed? The Confederate brigade withdrew to Cashtown, reporting the advance of a large hostile force on Gettysburg; and next morning, July 1, General Hill went forward with two divisions of infantry to ascertain the strength of the enemy. These two divisions found the Federal cavalry dismounted, holding a strong position in front of Gettysburg, and gradually drove them back upon the town. Meanwhile, between 10 A.M. and 1.30 P.M. two Federal army corps arrived, and the Confederates were in their turn pushed back. Then at 2.30 P.M. up came Ewell from Heidlersburg, and a general advance drove the Federals through Gettysburg at 4 o'clock with very heavy loss.

Near the close of the action General Lee arrived upon the field, and the whole of his army was rapidly closing up. But it was still far from being fully concentrated, and so exhausted were the troops in immediate contact with the enemy, so strong the position to which the Federals had retired, a mile south of the town, and so uncertain the estimate of their numbers, that the Confederate general made no effort to follow up his success. He directed the necessary preparations to be made for an attack the next morning as early as practicable.

Thus ended the first day's battle, in which about 22,000

men on each side were engaged, and which resulted in a Confederate victory.

There are several points which may here be noticed; the first regarding the Confederate strategy on this day.

To begin with. When Lee started upon the campaign, he had not intended to deliver an offensive battle at so great a distance from his base of operations, but, owing to the absence of his cavalry, and the engagement brought about by Hill's reconnaissance, he had now no other course open but to attack the enemy as vigorously as possible. It would certainly have been more promising of success had his inferior army of 70,000 men been able to await, in a carefully prepared position, the attack of the 100,000 Federals led by Meade.

Certain critics of the campaign, amongst them the Comte de Paris, the historian of the war, and General Longstreet, commanding one of the Confederate army corps, hold very different views. They assert that Lee had three other courses open to him, each of them more promising than the one he actually adopted.

1st, to retire to the passes of the South Mountain, and thus to compel Meade to attack him in a very favourable position.

2nd, to await attack in his present position.

3rd, to move round the left flank of the Federal position and to interpose between the Federal army and Washington, taking up a strong position; and if Meade refused to attack, to move back in the direction of Washington, which threat to the capital would probably induce the Northern general to do so.

In his report of the battle the Confederate Commander-in-Chief disposes of the first two of these suggestions very summarily. His army was living on the country, and it would have been exceedingly difficult to subsist 70,000 men, occupying a stationary camp, in face of a numerically superior enemy. No district, however rich, can supply a large army for more than forty-eight hours, and the greater part of the army had just passed through the district east and west of Cashtown by easy marches.

As to the last proposal, which was strenuously urged after the first day's battle by Longstreet, Lee, according to one of

his chief staff officers, pronounced it, under the circumstances, impracticable.

Now, what were the circumstances that thus paralysed his army and his own great skill in daring manœuvres? Why was a flank march, possible in front of Hooker in June, impossible in front of Meade in July?

The answer is simple—the absence of the cavalry.

One of the chief requisites for a flank march is that it should be made with the greatest rapidity. What speed was possible if the infantry divisions were compelled to reconnoitre themselves to front, flank, and rear, halting at every alarm, harassed by the hostile horsemen? How was Lee to ascertain whether the enemy had not a force posted to his left rear, ready to crush the head of the turning column?

We have only to turn to the disastrous march of McMahon's army, culminating in the terrible defeat of Sedan, to understand the difficulties and danger of a flank march without cavalry to screen the movement.

I need hardly say that the other alternative, a retreat through the South Mountain, was never entertained for a moment. To withdraw by narrow roads in face of superior numbers would have been no easy matter. Moreover, a retreat would have left to the enemy all the moral results of victory, and would have been everywhere interpreted, by foreign nations as well as by the Northerners, as a confession of weakness on the part of the Confederate leader and of the Confederate Government.

Lastly, it is evident that had Lee's army been closely concentrated, which it would have been had he received early information of Hooker's march northward; he would have been able to seize Gettysburg and to inflict an annihilating defeat on the two corps which formed the Federal advanced guard.

As to the Federals. We may first of all notice the brilliant initiative of General Buford, the cavalry commander, who, on reaching Gettysburg, and recognising the importance of the position, determined to hold it, although hostile infantry was visible, until his own infantry came up. Second, the value of

cavalry who were so trained as to be able, when dismounted, to hold in check a superior force of infantry for two hours, and to give time for the arrival of reinforcements. I may notice that this same cavalry, later in the day, when the Federal line was giving way, was ordered to charge the victorious enemy pressing forward in pursuit. The charge was never made—probably the nature of the ground, the numerous woods, walls, and fences, forbade it—but the division formed up with every intention of charging, and it is said that the Confederate battalions formed square, and so lost much precious time. Third, the judicious selection of a position by this same officer, not on the crest of the ridge immediately south of Gettysburg, but along the banks of Willoughby Run, more than a mile west. He recognised that the ridge to the south was the true position; and that as he would certainly be sooner or later forced back, it would be better to leave it to be strongly occupied by the remainder of the army. As it turned out, when the troops west of Gettysburg were forced back on the morning of July 1, they found the ridge occupied and entrenched. As we have seen, General Lee judged it too formidable to attack the same evening.

There is another Federal officer whose conduct calls for the highest commendation. This was General Hancock, commanding the 2nd corps. To appreciate his action we must turn to what General Meade had been doing since he started on his northward march from Frederick on the 29th. Till the evening of July 1, the first day of the battle, he was ignorant of Lee's whereabouts. All he knew was that the Confederate army was somewhere between Chambersburg and Carlisle, and that it was now moving southwards. His own army corps were dispersed over a wide extent of country east and south of Gettysburg. But he knew enough of Lee's movements, and whilst Hill and Ewell were converging on Gettysburg for the assault on his advanced guard, he was issuing orders for his chiefs of engineers and artillery to select a field of battle, covering Lee's lines of approach, whether by Harrisburg or Gettysburg, indicating the general line of Pipe Creek as a suitable locality.

But on receiving news of the fight at Gettysburg, he sent Hancock to the battlefield, directing him either to bring the two advanced corps to Pipe Creek or to prepare for a general engagement at Gettysburg.

As soon as the action with Hill and Ewell was over, and the defeated Federals were firmly established on the ridge south of the town, Hancock sent back to Meade, whose headquarters were thirteen miles in rear, informing him that the position was a very strong one. Moreover, he kept his men behind their entrenchments, without taking any step towards retiring to the line of Pipe Creek. This, as it turned out, was a most momentous decision, and I think that the courage of the general who, in command of a defeated force, confronted by superior numbers, and aware that the supporting army corps were much scattered, refused to abandon the strong and formidable position he occupied and to leave to the enemy the moral results of a victory culminating in the retreat of the vanquished, is well worth notice.

Meade, relying on Hancock's soldierly instinct, and appreciating his motives, hurried the whole of his corps, scattered as they were, to the front, and at midnight rode forward to the field.

By forced night marches his troops pushed on, but at daylight next morning only four of the seven corps were present, and two of these had been very roughly handled on the previous day. By eight o'clock two more had come up, making in all some 65,000 men.

At daylight, however, there were no more than 40,000 present, and it is very evident that the Confederate attack should have been made at that hour. It is also evident that the Federal corps, like the Confederate army, had become separated by too wide intervals in their advance; and, in the absence of information, concentration should be an invariable rule.

During the night, Lee had learned from prisoners that only a portion of the Federal army occupied the opposite ridge. It was clear that an opportunity presented itself of dealing with the enemy in detail; and the meanest capacity must have

grasped the advantage of storming the strong position south of Gettysburg before it should be occupied in overwhelming strength.

Now Lee's own orders to his lieutenants had been to attack 'as early as practicable.' But as a matter of fact the attack was not made until 4 P.M., just eleven hours too late.

On this circumstance, which has given rise to much unpleasant controversy amongst the surviving generals of Lee's army, I shall make no comment beyond saying that it was unfortunate that the attack should have waited on the movements of Longstreet, the general who had so strenuously advocated the flank movement to turn the Federal left.

Moreover, there was very indifferent Staff work done on this morning in Longstreet's corps, one of his divisions taking a wrong road, and much delay being caused by the fact that the roads were not reconnoitred previous to the march.

As to the fighting on this day little need be said. The Federals were strongly posted from Cemetery and Culp Hills, on the right, to a point west of the ridge, on which stands the Peach Orchard, on the left. The orchard, standing on a rise a good deal lower than Cemetery Ridge, had been occupied, not on General Meade's authority, for he intended his left to rest on the Round Tops, but on the initiative of the general commanding the left wing, and, as may be seen from the map, it was salient to the rest of the line, and much nearer to the Confederate front than the right flank. Lee's plan of attack was as follows: Ewell, from the north, that is, from Gettysburg, and the height to the east, was to attack Cemetery Hill. Longstreet on the right was to attack the Peach Orchard position, turn the Federal flank, and, wheeling half-left, to advance in the same direction up the Emmetsburg road, rolling up the Federal line from left to right.

The two attacks were to be made at the same moment, and this part of the programme was carried out.

Ewell assaulted the Federal right in two columns. That on the left, Johnson's division, which moved on Culp's Hill, was fairly successful. When night fell, Johnson's troops had possession of a line of Federal entrenchments, and held on to this

position during the night. But the attack on Cemetery Hill was a failure.

It was made by two divisions, one from the east of Gettysburg, to be supported by another which had to advance through the town itself. The first division, under General Early, had but 700 yards to traverse before it reached the Federal lines. The second, under General Rodes, had to move out of the town, then to deploy, and finally to move over a space of nearly 1,400 yards. The consequence was that Early attacked and was successful, but the co-operating column failed to come up in time to enable him to meet a counter-attack, and he was driven back.

Here, again, it is impossible not to criticise the working of the staff. On the field of battle, to see that the combined movements of the larger units are made with due consideration for time and space is the most important duty of the staff.

On the Confederate right, Longstreet succeeded in driving back the Federals from the Peach Orchard line. But he was unsuccessful in rolling up their line towards Cemetery Hill. The Confederate right was already in position to attack Little Round Top, the key of the position, when a Federal general, Warren, Meade's Chief of Engineers, reached the hill with orders from Meade to examine the condition of affairs. From this height he saw, in the long line of woods west of Emmetsburg road, the glistening of gun-barrels and bayonets, and, promptly realising the situation, he sent back to Meade for a division at least. The situation, he says in his report, 'was almost appalling!' Fortunately, before the Confederates could reach this hill, where they would have been established in rear of the Peach Orchard, and whence they would have enfiladed a great part of the ridge, a Federal brigade, with some batteries on their way to reinforce the line in front, came up and were ordered by Warren, on his own responsibility, to occupy Little Round Top. Here a heavy struggle took place, and although Longstreet drove back the enemy from the Peach Orchard, he was unable to turn their flank, for reinforcements were rapidly brought up to the rocky ridge and ravine called

the Devil's Den, and the Federals made good their withdrawal to Cemetery Ridge.

I may add that the Federal infantry, bravely as it fought, seems to have owed its safety to the devotion of the gunners, who showed most remarkable gallantry in covering their retreat. One battery lost all its officers but one, six out of seven sergeants, twenty-eight men out of one hundred, and sixty-six horses out of eighty-eight. Moreover, a line of five-and-twenty guns, hastily moved up to the ridge in rear, although unsupported by infantry, did much towards checking the Confederate pursuit.

There is one point connected with this attack which calls for particular comment.

I have already stated that Round Top was the key of the position; and it is evident that had the Confederates once occupied this commanding height, the Federal troops, when forced back from the Peach Orchard, would have been compelled to retreat towards Cemetery Hill.

When Longstreet's line got into position, his right brigade was well in front of the Emmetsburg road, at an oblique angle to it, and this brigade was supported by a second, 200 yards in rear. As soon as the troops took up their place, the commander of the advanced brigade, General Laws, sent off a patrol of six men to ascend the steep and densely wooded slopes of Round Top, and to locate the extreme left of the Federal line.

Before the attack began, one of these men came back at the double, reporting that Round Top was unoccupied, and that there were no Federal troops in rear of the hill. This intelligence was corroborated by some prisoners who were just then captured. The Brigadier immediately rode over to his divisional commander, and pointed out the ease with which the Federal left might be turned. The divisional commander coincided fully with his views, but declared that his orders were positive to attack in front. On the Brigadier protesting, the divisional commander sent an aide-de-camp to General Longstreet. An order was sent back which was interpreted to mean that the original plan of attack was to be followed out to the letter. The right brigade, therefore, moved forward against the Devil's

Den, cleared that, and when it afterward moved against Round Top, found it occupied and was beaten back.

We can only say that it seems unfortunate that the question whether the attack on Round Top was advisable or not should have been submitted to the general that had so strongly advised Lee not to attack the Gettysburg position at all.

His summary message to the divisional commander to carry out the original plan at least lays him open to the suspicion that, although he was prepared to obey orders, it was like a machine and not like an intelligent being. There was no question of acting on his own initiative even, and of taking it on himself to modify his instructions. The Commander-in-Chief was close at hand, and he might have communicated with him at once, just as his subordinates had done with himself.

On this same evening of the battle of July 2 there was a very curious exercise of initiative, a very marked assumption of responsibility, on the part of two Federal officers. One of these was General Warren, who, on seeing Round Top without a single bayonet on it, dashed down the hill and ordered up the first regiment he came across. The other was the regimental commander, who, although following the leading battalion of his brigade, on receiving an urgent demand for assistance from a senior officer of the general staff, accompanied by a brief explanation of the situation, broke the line of march of his brigade without hesitation, and marched straight up the hill, arriving in time to secure its possession to the Federals.

In Germany, where the advantages of the initiative are most highly appreciated, this question of how far a commander, coming up in support with orders to move to a certain locality, is justified in answering urgent appeals for assistance from another locality altogether, and in departing from his original orders, is often very warmly discussed.

An incident occurred at the battle of Woerth, in 1870, which has been made the text of a long discussion in a German study of that battle; a study which is well worth reading, and which, for the consolation of those who do not read German, was admirably paraphrased, by Colonel Lonsdale Hale, in the 'Contemporary Review' for June 1892.

In this case it does not appear that the need of support was absolutely necessary in order to save the day. There was nothing in the situation which clearly indicated, as at Round Top, that if the supporting troops obeyed their original orders the battle would be lost.

The third day of Gettysburg dawned on two armies that still stood face to face on equal terms. The Confederates had carried the Peach Orchard, and Johnson's division was established on Culp's Hill, but the Federals occupied a stronger position than on the previous day, the line from Cemetery Hill to Round Top. Their strongest corps, which had not come up until the evening of the 2nd, had not yet been engaged; and their troops were concentrated in a horseshoe which did not measure more than two and a half miles. They had indeed suffered a severe repulse the previous afternoon. But the Generals, assembled at a council of war after the battle had ceased, had resolved, with scarcely one dissentient voice, to maintain their ground despite their heavy losses; and the morning of one of the most momentous days in American history saw their volunteer soldiers, worn and exhausted as they were with two days' fighting, which had been all against them, outflanked on one wing, and with an enemy before them who had beaten them—or rather their generals—in battle after battle, still resolute, confident, and even cheerful. By all the rules of war they should have been demoralised and unnerved. Yet they were never in better spirit for the fight than on this third day of battle, with their line of retreat seriously threatened by the presence of Johnson's division in rear of their right wing and with nothing but disaster during the past two days to look back upon. Surely they had inherited the best quality of British soldiers. They refused to acknowledge that they were beaten.

The Confederates, flushed with the partial triumph of the preceding day, had no helpless prey before them. When the light broke on the Cemetery Ridge, showing the Northern batteries and battalions still in position, covered by breastworks and stone walls, and commanding the long open slopes to the westward, it was evident that the hardest part of the task was

yet to be accomplished. And to make matters worse, the army was badly placed for attack. From Johnson's left on Culp's Hill to Longstreet's right below Round Top, the front covered no less than five miles, more than twice the front occupied by their opponents, who were also superior in numbers.

Nor was it possible to shift troops from one flank to the other. The roads by which they would have to pass were not only visible from Cemetery Ridge, but were commanded by the Federal Artillery. The army, owing to the absence of the cavalry, had blundered into battle on the first day. Ewell had then attacked from the north, and it was almost impracticable afterwards to contract the line to a reasonable length. Such an extent of front, manned by only 60,000 men, swallowed up almost all reserves; and on the morning of July 3, Lee had one of the hardest problems to deal with that was ever proposed upon the field of battle: Which part of that long extended line should be thrust forward to make the decisive stroke, which was to annihilate the last army of the Federals in the east, and drive the Northern Government from the capital?

So confident was he in the powers of the gallant men he had led so often to victory that, difficult as was his task, Lee never seems for a single moment to have despaired of success. Yet the day opened ominously. As the sun rose, a vigorous attack of the Federals on Culp's Hill, prepared during the night, drove Johnson's division in panic down the hill. But the great Confederate general was not disconcerted by the mishap. It would have been scarcely possible to support Johnson with sufficient force to make an attack on Culp's Hill decisive, and his mind was already seeking to find a point where he could attack with all his strength, and where, to the Federals, defeat would mean annihilation. The right flank of the enemy was secure, for he could not move troops in that open country to attack it, and it was far from their line of retreat. The left flank rested on the impregnable position of Round Top, and he dared not weaken his line to turn it. There remained only the centre, and he determined to try Napoleon's decisive stroke.

The action began at 1 P.M., by which time the Confederates had brought 140 guns into line from opposite Gettysburg to

the Peach Orchard ridges. Their fire was answered by ninety Federal guns upon the opposing crest. At 3 o'clock the hostile artillery ceased fire. Eleven ammunition wagons had been blown up, but the losses had not been heavy; in fact, the fire was more dangerous behind the ridge than on its crest. The fire was not concentrated, but scattered over the whole field. The Federal chief of artillery, however, found his ammunition was running low, and resolved to keep his remaining rounds for the assault which he knew must follow. The Confederates, on finding that the enemy had ceased fire, immediately moved forward to attack, thus making that too common mistake of neglecting to bombard the enemy's infantry when his guns have been silenced. During the artillery duel the Federal infantry had been lying behind the entrenchments and stone walls. They had suffered but little loss; they were in no wise demoralised, and were perfectly ready to defend the position to the last.

Lee's scheme of attack was this. Longstreet, who had been reinforced in the night by a fresh division of 5,000 men, Virginians, some of the best troops in the army, and led by General Pickett, one of the most daring amongst the Confederate officers, was to send in three divisions, one of his own and two of Hill's, numbering about 15,000 bayonets, and the flanks of the column were to be protected by the advance of the artillery. Nor was this all, at least according to the testimony of Lee's staff officers. He intended, according to them, that the attack should be supported by Longstreet's two remaining divisions, and the general was authorised to employ another of Hill's divisions if necessary, in all 30,000 men. This General Longstreet denies, but it is remarkable that the two divisions of his right wing, posted opposite the Federal left, never moved a step forward nor were ordered to make any attempt whatsoever even to demonstrate in favour of the attacking column.

The attack, then, was made by 15,000 men in two lines. Pickett leading, Pettigrew in short echelon (100 paces) to the left rear, and Wilcox's brigade to the right. The distance the men had to traverse was nearly 1,200 yards in width. The ground was open, and intervening between them and the enemy

were several fences, a field of corn, a tiny brook, and then the open slopes to the Federal position, covered on the crest by earthworks and stone walls.

Notwithstanding the strength of the position they were to storm, and the terrible fire at that range which the Federal artillery, coming into action again as they advanced, poured into their ranks, Pickett's Virginians advanced with a steadiness and precision which called forth the generous admiration of their gallant enemy. Only the skirmishers in front used their rifles, and the long lines in rear pressed forward without a check. Thrown somewhat into disorder in clearing the fences of the Emmetsburg road, they wheeled half-left at the house which stood in their path, and moved straight up the slopes in the direction of a conspicuous clump of trees. The long lines of Federal infantry opened on them in front. The guns, loaded with canister, tore great gaps through the crowded ranks, and from the slopes of Little Round Top they were enfiladed by more than one battery. As they approached the ridge their lines were torn by incessant volleys of musketry, and the second line crowded in upon the first. Under the heavy fire the supporting division on the left had given way, and a Federal brigadier, throwing forward a regiment with ready judgment, enfiladed Pickett's line. Yet with unfaltering courage the Virginians broke into the double, and with an irresistible charge went through and over the stone walls which confronted them, driving back their defenders, from flank to flank, and planting their colours on the summit of the ridge.

But they were few in number; and, as in the history of too many famous charges, at the moment of their success they looked back vainly for support. Not a single Confederate bayonet, save in the hands of wounded or retreating men, was between them and the ridge from which they had advanced, 1,200 yards in rear. Fiercely they struggled to maintain their position, but their courage had been thrown away. The Federals, though driven back, had not lost heart. The defence was as stubborn as the attack was dashing. Fresh regiments came thronging up, and within ten minutes Pickett, with the relics of his brave 5,000, was retreating down the slope. It

may be a fitting climax, that magnificent charge, to a battle never surpassed for desperate fighting; and it seems according to the fitness of things that the two commanders should have tacitly agreed to bring the conflict to a close. Meade made no attempt to initiate a counter-attack; and during the night, slowly followed by his adversary, Lee fell back through the South Mountain passes, and across the Potomac into Virginia.

The losses in the battle amounted to over 20,000 on either side, and it is said that Pickett alone lost six-sevenths of his strength.

There are two points to be noticed in connection with the third day's battle. First, the want of co-operation. What sight more curious than to see two armies, each of over 60,000 men, watching in breathless silence the advance of 15,000? Why were not Ewell's troops attacking on the left and Longstreet's remaining divisions on the right? We can only say that some one blundered. Again, remember that Pickett's flanks were to have been protected by the advance of the artillery, but the Confederate batteries, when the artillery duel ceased, had expended nearly all their ammunition, and this all important circumstance was never reported to General Lee.

I have said very little of the tactical use made by General Meade of his formidable position, but I would commend to anyone who may at some future time care to study this battle in detail, to notice particularly how skilfully he used his reserves, transferring them from point to point and throwing them without hesitation into the fight at the point where they were most needed, and how he was assisted in so doing by the small front and great depth of his position.

There are still a few points on which I should like to touch.

As regards the employment of the cavalry in the battle of Gettysburg, there are one or two incidents worth notice. On the third day the Federal cavalry south of Round Top did good service, both dismounted and mounted. Dismounting and occupying some stone walls they compelled Longstreet to detach a force to his right in order to hold them in check;

and, mounted, they made a gallant charge across very difficult country soon after Pickett's charge had been repulsed. This charge was certainly attended by heavy losses. But it threw the Confederate infantry on this wing into confusion, and had it been followed up by the Federal infantry on Round Top might have had a startling effect. The cavalry, however, was unsupported; but the confusion it created in the Confederate ranks, difficult as the ground was over which it charged—rocks, timber, and stone walls—leads up to the reflection that had Pickett been supported by cavalry the counter-attacks on his flank and the rallying of the Federal regiments when he carried the ridge would, at least, have been much interfered with. But Lee had no cavalry available. Stuart was well away on the left wing, north-east of Gettysburg, engaged with the main body of the Federal horse. He made a vigorous charge about the same time that Pickett moved out, evidently with the design of spreading panic in rear of Meade's army and so aiding the frontal attack, but was beaten back in a hand-to-hand fight.

In the wars of the future, when two armies are drawing near each other, the independent cavalry divisions will come into contact, and they will concentrate for a cavalry battle, possibly leaving either the front or flanks of their infantry uncovered, and affording an opportunity for the enemy's army to approach unobserved. This possibility is well worth notice, for at the last French manœuvres at which I was present, an incident occurred which showed that when the cavalry division is well out in front the commanders in rear feel a sense of security which is not always justified, and that they are prone to think themselves relieved of the necessity of reconnoitring their own line of march. The incident I refer to was the complete surprise of an entire infantry division by a brigade of cavalry and a horse artillery battery, owing to the absence of the very small force of divisional cavalry, a squadron only, in another direction, and the belief that the independent cavalry were watching the flank. As a matter of fact they were on this flank, but very far to the front, and whilst they were heavily engaged with infantry the enemy's brigade had

worked round to their rear, and appeared on the flank of the advancing column. In the Gettysburg campaign, I cannot help thinking that Stuart forgot for once that to cover the march of the army and to send in timely information are services of far greater importance than cutting the enemy's communications and harassing his rear. The close co-operation of the three arms is the secret of strategical and tactical success. A curious fact, as regards staff duties, and the extreme care that should be taken in drawing up instructions, comes out with respect to Stuart's failures. Lee allowed him to act on his own judgment as to moving round the enemy's rear, although he does not seem to have cordially approved of the idea. But at the same time he ordered him to instruct the commander of the two brigades left behind to watch Hooker, that if the Federals moved northward, he was to watch 'the flank and rear of the army,' moving into the Shenandoah Valley and 'closing upon the rear of the army.' Stuart, in his orders to his subordinates, used the words—'after the army has moved, cross the Potomac and *follow* the army, keeping on its right and rear.' The officer concerned, probably ignorant of the plan of campaign and the distribution of the army corps, did *follow* the army, with what result we know. The instructions he received from Stuart misled him. They attempted to cover all sorts of contingencies. In certain points they lacked precision. No stress was laid on the fact that those two brigades were to act as screens to the army, nor was it anywhere indicated that close contact with the army was above all things essential. In fact, the main point was lost sight of, or obscured by references to less important objects, which might well have been left to the initiative of the recipient. If his judgment could not be trusted, he was not a man to whom the command of a detached force, and so important a duty, should have been assigned.

Stuart's letters, and also Lee's, are quoted in 'Battles and Leaders of the Civil War,' vol. iii. pp. 252–3.

The second point is the conduct of the great infantry attack on the Federal centre. The Staff, as we have seen, seemed utterly incapable throughout the battle of bringing the

efforts of the larger units into timely co-operation, and at the most important crisis of the whole engagement their failure to ensure combination was conspicuous. In the first place, there is no doubt that Lee intended that 30,000 men should have been employed instead of 15,000. In the second place, the supporting brigades on either flank were not well handled; the left brigade was too close to the centre, the right brigade, when Pickett in the centre changed direction a little to the left, moved forward in the original direction, soon found itself isolated, and fell back. In fact there were no supports at hand to confirm success when the crest of the ridge was carried, neither infantry, cavalry, nor artillery.

It is curious that Osman Pasha's splendid attack when he attempted to break out of Plevna was almost an exact reproduction of the Confederate assault at Gettysburg. He had 30,000 men, of which 15,000 formed his reserve. He also had to move over absolutely open ground, and he also was partially successful. Two lines of entrenchments were carried. But when another effort was required to complete the success, the reserve was not forthcoming. Its passage across the river had been blocked by the carts of the fugitive inhabitants of the town; and nothing was left but surrender. At Chattanooga, again, Grant's most brilliant battle, November 25, 1863, the decisive attack was made on a part of a position which seemed impregnable, by 25,000 men carefully formed up in three lines. I cannot help thinking that these instances show us the necessity of most careful preliminary arrangements when a large mass of troops is sent forward to attack. The whole force should be drawn up with proper intervals and distances. Every commander should have his objective pointed out. No movement should be permitted until every unit is ready to step off at the same moment. Artillery should accompany the attack, prepared, if necessary, to push forward into the fighting line, and cavalry should follow, watching for every opportunity of striking in. Over and over again we read of attacks of this nature which were manifestly unsuccessful because sufficient precautions had not been taken that the whole mass of men to be engaged in the operation should act in close co-operation,

because the operation lacked vigour, and because Napoleon's maxim, that in a decisive attack the last man and the last horse should be thrown in, was disregarded.

The explanation of the failure of the Confederate staff is not to be found in the fact that the majority had had very little previous training before the war broke out, many of them being volunteers, pure and simple, or that they were unaccustomed to handle large masses in an attack on a single objective. Two months before, in a far more difficult country, in a dense forest, at Chancellorsville, far more complicated movements had been made in exact combination, and the decisive attack had been made by a whole army corps of 25,000 men. I am forced to the conclusion that at Gettysburg Lee's whole army suffered from over-confidence. Face to face with an army they had beaten so often with inferior numbers they relaxed their precautions; and at Chancellorsville the preliminary arrangements for the great attack were made by General 'Stonewall' Jackson, a tactician of the first order, with the utmost deliberation. Not a battalion was allowed to move forward until every man was in his place and every available rifle was thrown into the fight.

The last point I wish to touch upon is the conduct of both the Federal and Confederate artillery, both before and during Pickett's charge. In the third volume of 'Battles and Leaders of the Civil War' we have descriptions of the battle by the artillery commanders on both sides, and their accounts are a detailed object-lesson in artillery tactics such as is seldom met with.

In the first place, the Federal batteries, although inferior in strength, were never silenced by the Confederate fire, but simply withdrew, in the words of the Chief of Artillery, 'to replenish ammunition and to prepare for the assault which he knew must follow.' On the other hand, we have it on the authority of the Confederate Chief of Artillery that he was completely imposed upon by these tactics. 'He had never,' he says, 'seen the Federals withdraw their guns simply to save them up for the infantry fight.'

Secondly, the latter officer says that the front occupied by

the artillery was so long that it was not well studied; the officers of different commands had no opportunity to examine each other's ground for chances to co-operate. Guns which might have enfiladed the Federal batteries playing upon Pickett simply fired straight to the front. In fact, concentration of fire on the tactical point had not been arranged, and dispersion of fire was the result. This brings us to a very curious fact. The two officers in charge of the artillery on either side had served in the same battery in the United States army before the war. The Federal had been the Major, and the Confederate had been placed under him expressly to receive instruction in field artillery. At the final surrender of Lee's army, in April 1865, the two met and the conversation turned on Gettysburg. 'I told him,' writes General Hunt, the Northerner, 'that I was not satisfied with the conduct of the cannonade at that battle, inasmuch as he had not done justice to his instruction: that his fire, instead of being concentrated on the point of attack, as it ought to have been, and as I expected it would be, was scattered over the whole field. He was amused by my criticism and said, "I remembered my lessons at the time, and when the fire became so scattered wondered what you would think of it."' Well, Hunt thought very little of it, for he says that 'most of the enemy's projectiles passed overhead'—he was standing with his own batteries—'the effect being to sweep the open ground in rear—a waste of ammunition, for everything here could seek shelter. . . . In fact, the fire was more dangerous behind the ridge than on its crest.'

The last point of many well worth notice is, that when Pickett advanced, descending into the valley, the Confederate guns reopened over the heads of his troops 'when the lines'—I am quoting the Confederate Chief of Artillery—'had got a couple of hundred yards away, but the enemy's artillery let us alone and fired only at the infantry.'

Here, again, in the action of a large mass of artillery, we have forcibly impressed upon us the importance of careful preliminary arrangements, and the necessity of training officers, when large numbers of batteries are employed, to make co-operation against the tactical objective their first thought.



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CHAPTER XI

THE CAMPAIGN IN THE WILDERNESS OF VIRGINIA, 1864

THERE is to be found in the correspondence of Napoleon a letter written to an official in France during the great campaign of 1807, which has reference to the theoretical study of the art of war. The Emperor complains that it is very difficult to know what books are useful for the study of military history, and declares that, owing to this difficulty, he had read a great many books which he found quite worthless, and had thus wasted a great deal of time.

It is perhaps a further proof—if further proof were necessary—of the great importance which the greatest of all soldiers assigned to theoretical study, that he should have found time, in the midst of a great army actually confronted by the enemy, to write a letter on such a subject. But it is not my purpose to emphasise the lesson which may be deduced from his words, and to enlarge on the necessity of our making ourselves acquainted with the great campaigns of history. Such a course of study has for its chief end the education of the mental faculties, the strengthening of the intellect, and the development of a capacity for hard thinking. I can scarcely imagine that it is still necessary to defend the advantages of education; nor is there anyone bold enough nowadays to deny that an active intellect and a capacity for hard thinking are absolutely requisite in any officer who aspires to command troops with honour and success. It is only the uneducated who cry out against education; only the ignorant who are unable to realise the benefits of knowledge; only the man whose ideas of war are absolutely different from those of Napoleon and Wellington, lacking the common-sense with which those great men were so

pre-eminently gifted, who dare rail at the study which they considered so essential.

I think that to-day we are all of us quite willing to take the world's most famous soldiers as our masters, and to accept their methods and their teaching as the best means of making and of learning war.

But Wellington and Napoleon are not the only masters of war, and I should like to bring to the notice of our rising soldiers a very great campaign which has by no means attracted the attention it deserves, yet which is full of instruction for officers of all ranks, and, in my humble opinion, gives a better clue to the fighting of the future than any other which history records. In May 1864, when the campaign began, the Americans had been fighting for just three years. Their armies, which had to be improvised on the spot, out of a civilian population, absolutely innocent of all military knowledge, were not very good for the first year or so. They were certainly not equal to regular troops. It is hardly possible, when we consider the disadvantages under which they laboured, that it could have been otherwise. But three years of active service told their tale. General Sherman, a man whose ability and honesty none can deny, has written that after 1863—that is, in the year of the Wilderness campaign—they were equal to any European troops. I see little reason to doubt the accuracy of this observation, and I believe, moreover, that in very many respects the American armies of which he spoke were superior and more advanced in military knowledge than even the Germans in 1870. The American regular officers who filled the higher grades were remarkably well-educated and well-trained soldiers before the war began, and it would have been strange if three years' experience in handling huge masses of men, of incessant fighting against very gallant enemies in a very difficult country, had not stimulated the acute American intellect, already well cultivated, to evolve strategical and tactical methods admirably adapted to the needs of modern warfare.

What these methods were I shall try to make clear, and I think that some day the majority will be induced to agree

with my high estimate of the value of this campaign as a clue to the fighting of the future. The American armies were composed of volunteers, with a small leaven of regular officers, who filled the higher commands and the principal appointments on the staff. Now I do not think I am predicting impossibilities when I say that armies somewhat similar in constitution may at some future date have to be handled by ourselves. England has before now been drawn willy-nilly into continental wars; she has before now had to engage in a life-and-death struggle with the Great Powers, and the early part of the nineteenth century saw her troops engaged, not only on the mainland of Europe, but in almost every important island in the Mediterranean, and, what is perhaps more to the point, in almost every single colony or outlying dependency in possession of her enemies. In the great French war, although transport was far more difficult than it is to-day, there were few parts of the globe to which the English navy did not convey English troops; and a list of the various countries and islands which were captured, occupied, and garrisoned by English soldiers is very suggestive reading. The very names on our regimental colours remind us that at every point of a hostile or friendly State which can be reached by sea those colours have been planted; and history tells us with what extraordinary effect the combined naval and military force of England, often insignificant in numbers, but backed up by a long purse, have struck at the resources, the commerce, and the prestige of her most formidable enemies.

History repeats itself. There is no sign whatever, despite long years of peace, that the prospect of our being drawn into a great European conflict is more remote than heretofore. Increased prosperity, greater wealth, and wider interests can scarcely be considered as security in themselves against attack. It is true that in the navy we have our first line of defence, but this very title proves its weakness. The navy is a defensive force, pure and simple, and without the assistance of the army it is passive; it can ward off the blow; but it cannot return it, and if our efforts were confined to naval operations, the counter-stroke, the soul of the defence, would

be impossible. We could scarcely hope either to annihilate or to exhaust our enemy. It is possible my judgment may be at fault—I stand open to correction—but as yet I see no cause to believe that in any future European struggle in which we shall be engaged our traditions will be forgotten, and that British troops will not be despatched to occupy those extremities of the enemy's possessions which the command of the sea lays open to our attack. I cannot imagine that our duties will be limited to garrisoning ports and coaling stations, and I can easily conceive a second Peninsular or Crimean campaign. And when we consider the large resources which we have now at our disposal, the enormous reserve which the Volunteer force of Great Britain and the colonies provides, it is still more difficult to imagine that this reserve will prefer to remain idle when the honour of the country is at stake.

If I see in the future an English general at the head of an army far larger than that which drained the life-blood of Napoleon's empire in the Peninsula, if I see our colours flying over even a wider area than in the year which preceded Waterloo, you may think that I am over-sanguine; but to my mind the possibility exists, and with it the probability that the forces which are employed upon the counter-stroke will be constituted, at least in part, as were the armies of the American Civil War. Our men will not all be regulars. They will come straight from civil life, and to civil life they will return. The habits and prejudices of civil life will have to be considered in their discipline and instruction, and officers will have to recognise that troops without the traditions, instincts, and training of regular soldiers, require a handling different from that which they have been accustomed to employ. To my mind this is one of the most important lessons to be learned from the American War by English soldiers. Some of the American officers could get as much out of the volunteers as out of veteran troops. Others, who did not understand their peculiar prejudices, failed to acquire their confidence, and, despite their ability, failed in every operation they undertook. With regulars they would probably have been successful; with volunteers they fell from disaster to disaster.

It is possible that all will not agree with me. Some may consider that the system of command adopted for the regular army is applicable to all troops who wear a uniform. But a close study of the American campaigns has forced upon me the conviction that it is not sufficient to bring volunteers under military law. The rules and regulations which govern the regular army are doubtless enough to ensure their obedience and subordination, but something more is required to secure their confidence, and to make them reliable under circumstances of danger, difficulty, and hardship. What this is may be learned from the lives of the American generals, Lee, Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Hancock, and, perhaps above all, Stonewall Jackson. The following is an extract taken from an article on Hancock, one of the most successful corps commanders in the Wilderness campaign.

'He never sneered at the volunteers. He made them feel, by his evident respect, his hearty greeting, his warm approval of everything they did well, that he regarded them just as fully, just as truly, soldiers of the United States as if they belonged to his own old regiment. Such was the spirit in which Hancock met his new command. We know with what assiduity, patience, and good feeling, what almost pathetic eagerness to learn and to imitate, the Volunteers of 1861 sought to fit themselves to take their part in the great struggle. He saw that it was of extreme importance to promote the self-respect and self-confidence of the volunteer regiments, to lead them to think that they could do anything, and were the equals of anybody. But Hancock was a man of sound common sense, who understood human nature thoroughly, and was therefore fit for high command. He was not a mere drill-sergeant, not a mere fighting animal, and not a mixture of officialism and routine.'

This is not the only point on which English soldiers can draw instruction from a study of the war. The command of the sea, and combined military and naval operations, played throughout a most important part, and in the Wilderness campaign the strategy of the attacking side depended on the same facilities for changing the bases of supply and the lines of operations as were made use of in the Peninsula, in 1854, and in 1882. In this respect, at least, the operations of the Federal

army were the counterpart of many English campaigns. Again, the country over which the troops moved and fought was difficult in the extreme. The maps available were few and bad. Virginia, the theatre of war, was thinly populated—not half opened up. A great part of the State was covered with primeval forest. There were immense tracts of swamp and jungle which were terra incognita to all but a few farmers and their negro slaves. The roads were as scarce and indifferent as the maps. The country produced but little in the way of supplies; and the invaders, when they crossed the border, had the very difficulties to face which so often confront English troops, engaged in rounding off the corners of the Empire by annexing some considerable tracts of savage territory. The organisation of the auxiliary departments, the supply, the medical, and the reconnoitring, which enabled the Americans to overcome those difficulties, afford valuable suggestions to ourselves.

I may also notice, though the same observation applies to the study of any campaign whatever, that there is much instruction to be gained on two points on which text-books and field-exercises are necessarily silent, and which are yet of far more importance than strategical dispositions or formations. The first of these is that almost indefinable force which Napoleon declared was as to the physical, that is to numbers, armament, and physique, as three to one. Any general who ever made war successfully relied far more on the moral effects of his manœuvres than on the mere fighting qualities of his troops; and it may be said with absolute truth, that it was because he understood the immense power of moral influences that he was successful. But as it is the most important, so this factor in war is the very hardest to teach. Still it can be taught, or rather it can be learned, and I cannot help thinking that it is to this that Napoleon referred when he said that reading and re-reading the campaigns of the greatest captains was the best means of learning the art of war. I should find it by no means an unpleasant task to discuss this subject at length, but I can do no more here than to advise young officers, whenever they take up a book on military history, to keep this

factor always before their minds, to note every instance in which it exerted an effect, to take to heart the way in which it was employed, and to remember that it is to a thorough comprehension of its value rather than to mechanical aids, such as formations and fortifications, that the greatest captains owed their victories. The second point to which I refer is the individual character of the commander. I do not mean to say that we can all of us, by merely realising the mixture of prudence and audacity, the iron will, the invincible determination, the dogged perseverance, and the incessant application of, for instance, Wellington or Moltke, become Wellingtons or Moltkes ourselves. We came into the world endowed with certain mental and moral attributes; we have, all of us, our weak points, some perhaps have strong ones, but we were not created equal in this respect or in any other. Nor is the moulding of our character altogether in our hands. But it is useless to deny that, as in some degree at least we are masters of our own fate, we may be masters in some degree of our own natures. Example is a potent force in this world. We may never reach the ideal after which we strive, but it is within our power to approach it; and the effort to acquire the qualities which have distinguished great soldiers will not be a barren one.

The memories of what they did and what they dared may inspire us some day to imitate them, however feebly; and even a weak imitation may be superior to the working of natural impulse. In military history the very highest ideals may be found; and here again I would advise students of campaigns to mark the influence of the character of great soldiers on difficult operations, and to learn how determination, perseverance, and the fixed resolve to conquer, have enabled them to triumph over obstacles before which men of weaker fibre would have turned aside. To keep these points always before our minds, the influence of *moral* and the influence of individual character, is the true way of studying military history.

With these observations I come to the campaign itself, and I must now explain the general situation and describe the theatre of war. The Civil War, as I have already said, had, at

the beginning of May 1864, been going on for three years. The respective capitals of the United States and the Confederacy were Washington and Richmond. Richmond had been the great objective of all the fighting throughout the war. To capture Richmond was, in the opinion of the Northerners, to break the back of the Rebellion and to end the conflict; and their efforts throughout had been directed to this end. During the preceding three years they had made no less than five attempts to reach the Southern capital. Each one of these attacks had been beaten back.

In May 1864, the United States Government once more resolved to attempt the seemingly hopeless task. The Northern army (the army of the Potomac) was composed of the same troops that had been engaged in these various expeditions. The Southern army (the army of North Virginia) was the army which had beaten them back to Washington. Their respective strength at this time was as follows:—The army of North Virginia, covering Richmond, consisted of three army corps, two cavalry divisions, and 224 guns, giving a total of 62,000 officers and men. The army of the Potomac mustered 130,000, divided into five army corps, four divisions of cavalry, and 316 guns.

At the head of the Confederate army was General Lee, undoubtedly one of the greatest, if not the greatest, soldier who ever spoke the English tongue. He had been in command of the army of Virginia since June 1862—that is for two years, two years of incessant fighting and of numerous battles—and he possessed in a very extreme degree the confidence of his officers and the affection of his men. The Federal army, during this eventful period, had been commanded by several different generals. The Government elected the best general they could find at the beginning of the war; when he was beaten they relieved him and sent another. Five generals in succession had held the chief command. In 1864 came the turn of Grant. Grant had hitherto been fighting in the west far away on the Mississippi, where he had won some extraordinary victories, and had displayed great ability both as strategist and tactician. As Commander-in-Chief of the whole United States army, the

position to which he was now appointed, he had to devise a plan to capture Richmond, and to this end no less than four armies were set in motion. Whilst holding in his own hands the control of the campaign, he established his head quarters with the army of the Potomac, the pivot of the whole scheme of invasion; for before that army lay the main force of the Confederates, its old rival, the army of Northern Virginia; and it is well to remember, in order to appreciate Grant's difficulties and his strength of character, that with strange troops he had now to encounter a most formidable adversary, and that those troops had far more dread of Lee than confidence in himself.

At the beginning of May Grant decided to march on Richmond. His headquarters were at Culpeper in Virginia, for the Federals had mastered a certain portion of that State, and his troops, generally speaking, were massed round that town. Lee with his 62,000 men stood opposite, and the river Rapidan, a wide and deep stream, ran between the hostile camps. The Confederate headquarters were at Orange Court House, and the troops extended along the river bank in a strongly entrenched position. On the right flank of the line there ran a stream called Mine Run, and along this stream was a return entrenchment, striking due south from the river. The dispositions of the leaders raise an interesting question. Lee had to cover Richmond. The Federal army was posted at Culpeper, so he took up a position opposite to them and entrenched himself. His right flank was very strongly guarded by the return entrenchment, and his left flank was also strong by reason of the country; he had little fear that he would be seriously attacked in that quarter. Grant, when he reached Culpeper and took over command, found his opponent directly in front of him, covered by his formidable lines, and to all appearances barring the way to Richmond. He at once came to the conclusion that it was no good attacking the Confederate position; there was not only the river to be crossed, but there were the entrenchments to be carried. Should he move round and try to turn Lee's left? The railway which runs south from Culpeper afforded a line of supply which would have greatly facilitated this operation. But if he worked by

that flank Lee would fall back to some new defensive position, still covering Richmond, and the Federals would find no opportunity of fighting him at a disadvantage. It is important to note carefully, as a clue to the operations, that Grant was not aiming to avoid Lee and then seize Richmond. That would scarcely have been a judicious plan. Richmond was fortified, and he could not have held the town with the Confederate army intact behind him and cutting his communication with the north. His intention was to crush Lee first, and then deal with Richmond at his leisure; and in order to crush Lee with certainty, he wished to catch him at a disadvantage; *i.e.* to attack the army of Northern Virginia in the open, on ground where it would have no time to entrench, or, by intervening between it and Richmond, to compel Lee with his inferior numbers to attack the army of the Potomac. Putting the first two lines aside as impracticable or unpromising he only had a third left, and he determined to move south past the Confederate right.

A glance at the map will show that his line of supply, the Orange and Alexandria railway, ran past the Confederate left, and in selecting a line of operation by the opposite flank, he would have to abandon his communications. This was even a more momentous matter in Virginia than elsewhere, for there were no supplies whatever to be procured in the country. The question of provisions was a most difficult one, but it had no influence on his determination. He still held to the plan he thought most promising of success, although, in order to be free for protracted movements, the army would have to carry ten days' rations for man and horse. These ten days' rations for 130,000 men, together with ammunition and medical supplies, required about 5,000 wagons, a very great encumbrance to an army, especially in a country where the roads were few and bad. It is evident that Grant had no easy task. Remember that before he could pass Lee's right flank he had to cross the Rapidan, and that his movement, which should partake of the character of a surprise, was bound to be hampered by his enormous train. He resolved to march under the cover of the darkness. His orders were issued on May 2, and at midnight on the 3rd the

troops started. At dawn they reached the river, the cavalry leading, laid five bridges, and by the night of the 4th nearly the whole army and a portion of the train had passed. It was certainly a successful operation to get these enormous numbers over the river safely.

We now come to the question why Lee, who had to cover Richmond, made no attempt either to prevent Grant's passage, or to put himself in his way when he had got across? This is amost interesting point in the campaign, and it gives some idea of Lee's ability and daring. He knew well enough that Grant would endeavour to turn his right. He had told his generals several days before exactly what would happen, yet he made no attempt to stop his enemy crossing the Rapidan. He did not allow half of them to get across, then fall upon them and send them back defeated. He let the whole army make the passage without the slightest molestation; and remember he had only half the number of men that Grant had—62,000 against 130,000. But south of the river was a tract of peculiar country, a district which was simply a jungle, significantly called the 'Wilderness of Virginia.' It extended about ten miles south from the Rapidan, nearly as far as Spottslyvania Court House, and through this jungle lay the Federal line of march. Before Grant could get out into the open country he had to pass through the Wilderness. The Confederates, nearly all of them Virginians, knew this district well. Lee had already fought a successful battle against overwhelming odds in those very thickets, and he determined to let Grant entangle himself in the Wilderness and there attack him. In that most intricate country where artillery could not be used, where men familiar with the paths and clearings would have a good advantage over far superior numbers, he would throw his 62,000 men on Grant's 130,000. Whatever may be said of his judgment, everyone must admire his boldness; and this was the plan he had in view when he allowed Grant to push quietly across the river and bring his enormous impedimenta with him. When he found that the Federal army was well over, he marched east from Orange Court House and attacked it in the Wilderness. Nothing would serve him but to

annihilate the whole. The Confederates, however, had a long day's march to make before they could reach the field of battle their leader had selected; so, after crossing the Rapidan, Grant had twenty-four hours to himself, twenty-four hours in which to place his army across Lee's road to Richmond. His cavalry, scouting to front and flank, down the forest roads, found no signs of the enemy; there was nothing to prevent a rapid movement south; the Confederate commander had been apparently taken unawares; and, if he had moved at all, had merely occupied the return entrenchments along Mine Run, a position very strong in itself, and on the flank of the Federal line of march.

This position it would not be difficult to turn. There was comparatively open country to the south, where troops could manœuvre with ease, and the superior numbers of the Federals could be made full use of. There only remained to get clear of the Wilderness. This could not be done on May 4. The infantry and cavalry could have easily made the necessary march, but the 5,000 wagons took nearly thirty hours to cross the river, and the troops had to remain encamped in the jungle to protect the train. But next morning, the 5th, although the whole of the train had not yet crossed, the Federals struck south. Scarcely had they started on the march when Lee's columns dashed against their flank, and the battle of the Wilderness began.

To go into the details of this battle would take much too long, but it is interesting as an example of wood-fighting on a most extended scale. The armies fought for two days in the jungle. The Federals, however, were not beaten; their losses were very heavy, but they just managed to hold their own. The troops fought well, and they brought to their aid one of those new methods of warfare which the Americans had invented. Both sides suddenly found themselves within a few miles of the enemy. I need not say that in this very thickly wooded country the cavalry found themselves at a very great disadvantage; they could get very little information. But the infantry took good care of itself. Directly any brigade or division found that the enemy was coming up, it sent out scouts

to reconnoitre and immediately entrenched. There was no waiting for orders. If the general did not give the order, the battalion or company commanders acted for themselves, and it is even said that the men, directly they halted, threw up shelter without waiting for their superiors to give the word. The entrenchments were strong enough; and in this wooded country they were easily constructed. There were a great many expert axe-men in the armies, and trees were soon felled, or the fallen timber gathered. A pile of logs and branches made a good foundation, over these the men threw a little earth, and a parapet was soon constructed that was bullet-proof at least. With both sides entrenched, the course of this battle was simple in the extreme. One side came out from its entrenchments and attacked, got beaten and retired; the enemy followed in pursuit, but was brought up in turn by the entrenchments. In this thick wood manœuvring was almost impossible; what little took place was undertaken by the Confederates, who knew the ground. The troops were obliged to use the roads whenever they made a movement in any force; and it is an interesting point to note that there was a great deal of marching by the compass. The forest was so thick that this was the only way the battalions could keep in the right direction. The losses in this battle were very great. The Federals, during these two days, lost 15,300 men and officers; the Confederates 11,000. Bearing in mind the supreme importance of individual character I may call attention to the conduct of the rival commanders. It is impossible not to recognise Lee's audacity. Although he was doubly outnumbered he allowed the Federals to cross the river at their leisure; he made no attempt whatever to interfere with them until they were involved in the difficult country in which he wished to find them. It is true he did not defeat them, but he dealt them so staggering a blow, and inflicted such heavy losses, that he might well anticipate that retreat would be their only thought. But in Grant he had a foe of more than ordinary tenacity. The army of the Potomac had been defeated over and over again, and it is not too much to say that every general in the Federal army had hitherto considered himself

inferior to Lee. With some of them it was like the old days upon the Border, when the English mothers used to stop their crying children with the name of the Black Douglas. The mere mention of Lee's name to the officers of the stamp of Hooker and Burnside seems to have been enough. They were paralysed at once.

Now, here was Grant, a stranger to his troops, face to face with the hero of the war, the man before whom so many generals had gone down. He had fought him for two days in the Wilderness, and if he had escaped defeat he had lost a great many more men than Lee, and the fighting all through had certainly not been in the Federal favour. The morning after the battle they brought in a list of losses—15,000 men—and the enemy was still there: still there and not retreating! Grant had to decide what to do; it was little use attacking the enemy in his entrenchments; there seemed no hope of success, and the army would not have been surprised had he followed the example of his predecessors and retreated. But despite his losses, despite the demoralisation of his troops, despite the fact that he had not won an inch of ground, he determined to move forward, to follow out his original plan, and, if possible, to cut Lee off from Richmond, or at all events to force him to battle in a less impregnable position than the one he now held. This was the turning point in the campaign. In so deciding he had to face the difficulty as regarded communications. He had only seven days' provisions left, and there were all the sick and wounded to be sent to the rear. But the Federals had command of the sea. Moreover, several great water-ways run up into the heart of Virginia. There is the Rappahannock, and north of the Rappahannock is another and a larger river—the Potomac—which runs past Washington and the Northern Border. Both these rivers are navigable, and by means of his command of the water-ways Grant was able to change his base. He shifted it at once from the Orange and Alexandria Railway to Fredericksburg on the Rappahannock. On May 7 the Federals marched south, and again they marched at midnight. Grant's idea was to intervene between Lee and

Richmond, to entrench himself and compel his enemy to attack. He had quite realised the value of entrenchments.

And now came a most curious race, in which Grant had a little the worst of the luck. He made all his preparations to get off as secretly as possible. He sent his trains away in the afternoon, and the troops were not to move until darkness had set in. Lee had an idea that something was going on. He expected that Grant, like the other Federal generals, would fall back upon his base, but he had an idea at the same time that the Federal general might move on Spottsylvania Court House. The shortest road to Richmond ran past the Court House, so that this insignificant village was of the first importance. He therefore made preparations to meet all eventualities: and at the same time that Grant gave orders for his troops to march at midnight, Lee gave orders that a road was to be cut through the woods in the direction of Spottsylvania, so that one of his army corps could get there without delay. But this corps was not directed to march until the next morning. It was to move at 3 A.M.; Grant intended to start at midnight, and the Federal route was by very little the longer of the two. But, luckily for the Confederates, the army corps which was instructed to start at 3 A.M. did not wait so long. The neighbouring woods had been set on fire by the battle, and the general commanding the corps took upon himself to modify his orders. He wanted to escape from the blazing forest, so, instead of waiting till 3 A.M., he marched an hour before midnight. Whilst the infantry were marching through the night on Spottsylvania the Federals had sent on their cavalry to seize the Court House. But Lee had done exactly the same thing, and when the Federals arrived almost in sight of the village they found the way blocked by the Confederate horsemen.

This incident shows the value of cavalry who can fight dismounted. The Confederates had entrenched themselves all along the front, and the entrenchments were manned with rifles. Although these rifles were only held by cavalry soldiers, the Southerners managed to keep a much superior force in check until their infantry came up, and General Lee's army was the first concentrated round Spottsylvania Court House. When Grant

reached the field he was much disappointed to find that he had been outmanœuvred, that his midnight march had been no good, and that he was again confronted by lines of breast-works.

On the next day, May 9th, began the great battle of Spottsylvania—at least it is called a battle, but it was really a series of engagements that continued for about nine days. The sketches show how skilfully Lee had made his dispositions. He took up a position between the two streams which are called respectively the Po and Ny; his front was exactly adapted to the numbers he had at his disposal; in order to turn the position his adversary would have to cross one of the streams, and so divide his army, giving him an opportunity of dealing with him in detail, and his line was far stronger than that which he had held in the Wilderness. The country was still very thickly wooded—the Federals had still to face their old difficulty of finding out where the enemy was and in what direction his entrenchments ran. The first two days were occupied in reconnaissance. Reconnaissances, as we read about them in text-books, are always executed by the cavalry. The worst of it was that, although the Federals had plenty of cavalry, they were absolutely of no use at all in such a country; and so information had to be obtained by simply sending out brigades of infantry to stir up the enemy, and to see if he was in position at such and such a point. Reconnaissances in force were therefore the only means by which the Federals could find out anything about the enemy; and it is worth remembering, because reconnaissances in force are not operations with which we have much to do, and a good deal can be learned from these campaigns as to the manner in which they should be carried out. On May 10th the Federals had gathered sufficient information as to the enemy's position. The first thing they did was to send an army corps across the Po to see whether they could turn Lee's left; but Lee was entrenched so strongly behind the stream that attack was not permitted, and the corps was withdrawn after beating back a counter-stroke. This was on the morning of the 10th. By the evening they had found that at a certain point on the opposite flank the Confederate line was more accessible, and Grant ordered that while one

corps kept the Confederates employed, a strong attack should be made on the weak point. The formation adopted for the attack is interesting; the same principle was observed which obtains to-day on the Continent, and which is advocated in our own Drill-book. I say the principle only; I do not mean to convey the impression that the Federal troops observed the same intervals and distances that are now laid down. Three divisions were employed: one, on the right, was formed in two lines; two-deep lines with a few skirmishers out in front at about 200 paces distance. On the left there was the same formation, a second division was formed in the same way; but in the centre there was a heavy column of twelve battalions formed in four lines, at 100 paces distance.

The idea was, that the right and left wings should attract the enemy's attention and attack first, and that the central column, massed under cover, should rush the entrenchments. It is well to remember that breech-loaders were not used in America except by the cavalry; but the infantry had rifles, and very good rifles, for they could kill at more than 1,000 yards. About 300, or at most 400, yards was the effective range, but for all that they were very useful weapons although they were muzzle-loaders. This attack was perfectly successful. It was prepared by thirty pieces of artillery, and the central column managed, by making use of the shelter of the wood, to get close to the enemy's works before it was observed. The attack of the two wings engaged the attention of the Confederates; when the word to advance was given, the whole twelve battalions moved off as one man, charged the breast-works, swept clean over them, took 1,200 prisoners, captured twenty guns, and carried a second line of entrenchments in rear. But the Confederates had reserve brigades close at hand. These made a determined counter-stroke, and the Federals, in all the confidence of a successful attack, were driven out nearly as quickly as they got in. The men were exhausted; they had made a long charge, the fighting within the works had been very heavy, *and there were no supports.*

There is a useful lesson emphasised here. These great masses of men, in several lines, one behind the other, as has

been shown over and over again, if the ground is at all favourable, and the propitious moment seized, will go through anything, but if you want to keep what you have won you must have strong reserves behind. The same thing occurred at the Alma, where the great redoubt was carried without any great difficulty; but when the Russian columns came forward to the counter-stroke, the men looked back, and seeing no supports in rear, they streamed away. Much the same thing occurred at Spottsylvania on May 10th. I may add that, despite their deep formation, the Federals lost but few men until they were attacked in turn; the actual charge—the storm of the entrenchments—was not at all a costly proceeding.

On the 11th there was more reconnaissance, and the same evening General Grant determined on an attack on a larger scale. The central point of Lee's entrenchments, salient to the remainder of his lines, was believed to be the weakest part of the position, and during the night 20,000 men were massed against it. The formation was similar to that which had been partially successful on the 10th. There was one division on the right in two lines; a second in the centre, with a third in rear, but the battalions of these two divisions, instead of being in line, were formed in column, in fact they were in line of masses, and each battalion was in column of double companies. Perhaps the most interesting point in this attack was the manœuvring which took place before it. The whole army closed to its left, and the corps that made the grand attack was brought into position by a night march of some four or five miles, forming up outside their own entrenchments at 1,200 yards from the Confederate lines. Twenty thousand men were thus massed ready to attack at daybreak; and that they were able to march through dense woods where maps showed nothing, where the tracks were only known to the few guides, and to form for attack in the darkness with silence and precision show that staff duties in the Northern army were by this time thoroughly understood.

At half-past four on the morning of the 12th this enormous mass of men rushed forward, swept over the open ground in face of a heavy fire, tore away the abattis, and stormed the parapet. Holding the entrenchments was the best

division in the Confederate army, but nearly the whole were captured, together with twenty guns, two general officers, and several stands of colours. Nor were the Federals satisfied with this first success. The men pressed forward, and sweeping everything before them, drove the thin end of the wedge right into the Confederate lines. But Lee, recognising the weakness of the salient, had caused a return entrenchment, or rather another line of entrenchments, to be constructed about half a mile in rear. By this second line the Federals were suddenly brought up. The confusion was very great, the battalions had intermingled in the excitement of the charge, and the officers could neither make their orders heard nor form their men for another rush. Lee threw in his reserves. He made a tremendous counter-stroke. Every single battalion he could collect was ordered to attack; and the vigour of the blow was such that the whole of these 20,000 men were driven back beyond the first line of entrenchments, and the Confederates recaptured their first position.

The fighting that followed furnishes one of the most extraordinary stories in the annals of war. The infantry on both sides lay for the whole day with the parapets between them, in many places not more than ten or twelve paces distant. But in the end the Federals had to retire; they had found it impossible to break through the Confederate line. We may notice how nearly this great attack came to a complete success, and that the cause of its ultimate defeat was that in the excitement of the attack the second and third lines, instead of keeping their respective distances, closed in upon the first. I believe it is the experience of many officers who have been engaged in similar attacks that it is very difficult indeed to keep the men in hand, and that second and third lines invariably act as did the Federals. The column on which they principally depended, as soon as the first success was won, became a confused mass of men over which officers and non-commissioned officers had no control whatever, and when these men struck the second entrenchment they were merely a mob. It was said afterwards, by officers who had taken part in the fight, that the distance between the lines ought to have been

very much increased, and that the second and third lines ought to have waited until they saw they were wanted, and not to have reinforced till then.

In every country in Europe, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, so far as the principle goes, these deep formations—not of course in columns—have been generally adopted. The principle is that you mass opposite one point a great wedge which you intend to drive into the enemy's line, and that this wedge is composed of several lines one behind the other at such distance as may best suit the ground and the situation. The same formation, I need hardly repeat, is advocated in our own Drill-book. But it is a great point to remember that you should have a force behind this wedge in order to confirm success when you have broken in, for whatever may be the discipline of the troops it is impossible that confusion and intermingling of units can be avoided.

After the 12th General Grant determined to try at a new point. He was not done with yet; in the great attack he had inflicted heavier loss on the Confederates than they had on him, and his men, although they were beaten off, had fought so well and had come so near victory that they were quite ready for another effort. A movement by the left promised an opportunity of attacking Lee's right before it could be reinforced or his entrenchments extended. Grant therefore moved nearly the whole of his army by a night march of several miles to a line opposite to and outflanking the Confederate right. But here again he had the worst of the luck. During the night the rain fell in torrents. The roads were knee deep in mud. It was so dark that even the torches did nothing to make it brighter, and the men struggled wearily along at a very slow pace and with many halts. When day broke the advanced guards had reached the appointed rendezvous, but the columns in rear were so strung out and scattered, and the troops so utterly exhausted, that all idea of attack had to be abandoned.

This was unfortunate for Grant, as General Lee, who had no information of this new move, had very few troops on his right flank. If the roads had been dry it is exceedingly pro-

bable that the Confederate entrenchments would have been stormed. We have now reached the 14th. For the next three days Grant remained in position opposite Lee's right, resting his men, and receiving reinforcements; then he made another night march, returning to the scene of the great attack. Grant's idea was that he had been facing Lee's right for a long time, and that the Confederate general, expecting an attack on that flank, would probably have thinned his line in the centre. But Lee had done no such thing. He had a suspicion that his enemy might manœuvre once more, as he had done already, and he not only held his centre in force, but had strengthened it by abattis and artillery. So when Grant had marched round, and once more attacked the salient, he got well beaten; the position was a great deal too strong to be attacked. This was the end of the fighting at Spottsylvania. The Federals had lost 17,000 men, the Confederates about 12,000.

On the 21st Grant determined to strike boldly round the Confederate right, and if possible to force Lee to attack. The operations which followed are too complicated to describe here. The main fact is that Lee found out, by means of his cavalry, what Grant was doing, that he refused to fall into the trap which his opponent had laid, and, slipping quietly away, still making use of his interior lines, interposed between the Federals and Richmond behind the North Anna river; there he had two bridges opposite his right, a ford opposite his centre, and another ford two and a half miles distant beyond his left. I do not think that he believed that Grant would come over and attack him. He rather believed that he would move off once more past his right flank. When Grant, however, reached the river, and found Lee behind it, he determined to try the strength of this new position. He, therefore, ordered one of his army corps to cross the ford beyond the enemy's left, reconnoitre the Confederate position, and if there was any prospect of success to report at once. This corps crossed the bridge, and, as usual, immediately threw up a line of entrenchments. Now, Lee had, hitherto, been holding his own against the Federals with much success, but he had not yet defeated them. When he saw one

corps cross the river, more or less isolated from the remainder, he recognised the opportunity he desired, and he ordered an immediate attack. But he was not present himself during the engagement; unfortunately for the Confederates he was lying sick in his tent. However, he sent one of his best generals in command of the attacking corps, but the counter-stroke was unsuccessful. The Federals had entrenched, and when the Confederates came on and assaulted the breast-works, they found to their cost what a difficult business such an attack was, and the defence once more prevailed. Grant reinforced this corps by a second, and moved a third over the bridge opposite Lee's right. As the situation now stood, he had rather the advantage. One corps was still beyond the river, opposite Lee's centre, and if he could have thrown this corps over the ford in front of it, he would have had everything in his own hands, and have been able to crush the Confederates. He was much superior in numbers; his troops across the river were strongly entrenched, and he had no reason to fear attack.

Lee now put into practice a very curious manœuvre. His army was more or less separated. The corps on the left was three miles distant from those which held the right and centre, so it was possible that he might be beaten on one wing before his reserves could reinforce it. His line in fact was dangerously extended. He got out of his difficulty in this way:—he shut up his line like one closes an umbrella; the line had originally been almost straight, it now assumed the shape shown in the map. His whole force was now massed in a space not more than two and a half miles broad, and his enemy was not only widely separated, but would have to cross the river to reinforce one wing from the other. He could reinforce a point attacked in one-third of the time that Grant could reinforce at the same point. Grant was completely nonplussed by this manœuvre, in fact his only idea was to get out of his uncomfortable situation as fast as possible. He found that he had two corps on one wing, one corps on the other, separated by a wide interval and by the river. It was evident that nearly the whole Confederate army might fall either on one or on the other. As a matter of fact here was a very great opportunity—so say the

critics—which Lee might have seized, and which, if he had been himself, he probably would have seized; but as fortune would have it, when General Grant was entangling himself in this most awkward position, Lee, as I have said, was sick in his tent. On the night of the 26th, Grant got out of his difficulties by recrossing the river under cover of the darkness, and once more he moved round Lee's right. Lee followed suit as before, and the two armies eventually came into contact at Cold Harbor, and here was fought the last battle of the Wilderness campaign. General Grant advanced, hoping that he would find Lee getting into position, but he found instead that the Confederates were already entrenched with their flanks secured by streams, and that there was no chance of catching them at a disadvantage. And then at last he seems to have lost his temper. There was no manœuvring at Cold Harbor as there had been at Spottsylvania; there was no massing against one particular point; but the army moved straight against the Confederate front, and the order was given, 'the whole line will attack.'

There was no attempt at any formation beyond drawing up the army corps each in two lines. The artillery was ordered to do what it could in the way of bombardment, but that was very little; and when the attack was made it was driven back in little more than an hour with a loss of 12,000 men. Grant sent a fresh order that the attack was to be renewed, but the men lay still and would not move. The American soldiers had sometimes a way of their own of expressing what they thought of their general, and this time they showed him that such attacks against entrenched positions were absolutely impossible.

This battle took place on June 3rd; it was confined to a single attack, and here again the Confederates made no attempt at a counter-stroke. But they had little opportunity. Before the attack was made the Federals had constructed long lines of entrenchments, and Lee and his generals had found out by experience that it was no good attacking these hasty fortifications. During these operations Grant had again changed his base. Every time he moved by his left flank and tried to get round Lee, he shifted his base along the water-ways. First of all he began with the base on the railway; then he went to

Fredericksburg, then to Port Royal; next to the White House, and eventually to the River James. He changed his base no less than five times; his army was always well supplied, even his enormous numbers of wounded were carried straight away to the base and thence to Washington, without any difficulty; and he had no obstacles whatever to fight against as regards either feeding his men or keeping up the supply of ammunition.

The end of the campaign, so far as we are concerned, is the passage of the last great river, the James. The James, below Richmond, is as broad as the Danube near Vienna; a very difficult obstacle indeed; and it is curious to find that, notwithstanding this difficult obstacle, Grant not only carried the greater part of his army over before Lee was made aware of his movements, but that he very nearly defeated a portion of Lee's army, and captured a section of the earthworks which defended Richmond, from the south. After Cold Harbor, Grant threw all his cavalry towards Richmond along the White House Railway. They came in contact with the Confederates, and the Confederates could not discern what was going on behind this screen. Meanwhile all the infantry of the army moved down to the James, and made the passage. Grant had now determined to attack Richmond from the south, cutting the communications of the capital with the rest of the Confederacy, and in making his flank march he most certainly outmanœuvred Lee. It was only the slackness of one of his subordinates that saved the Confederate army, not indeed from defeat, but from being driven back into Richmond itself. Lee intended to defend Richmond behind the fortifications of Petersburg, a most important railway junction. But if Grant had at this juncture only had a little luck, the Confederate army would have been driven into the capital. It was, of course, strongly fortified, but it was by no means so strong as Petersburg, and the communications must have been immediately severed.

It is not necessary to explain Grant's perseverance in attacking the Confederates wherever he found them. It is obvious that Lee's army was his true objective, and that the occupation of Richmond could have had no decisive effect

while that army still held the field. If that army were thoroughly defeated, the fall of Richmond, and the end of the war, would follow.

I am afraid this is a very imperfect sketch of a very remarkable campaign, but a satisfactory description of these operations would make a fair-sized book. There are, however, a good many points which will bear a little explanation. First of all there is the question of entrenchments.

Defensive tactics, if we are to believe some people, resolve themselves into this:—If you have a point to hold, nothing more is necessary than to take up a position in front of it, to entrench your line till it is as formidable as Plevna, to man it with magazine rifles and machine guns, and to hold on. But I doubt if this is quite enough. I think, on the contrary, that it may be very dangerous, under all circumstances, to select your position long beforehand, and to make sure that the enemy will knock his head against it. Behind the Rapidan Lee held a very strong entrenched position, covering his line of communications, and covering Richmond. But Grant piles ten days' supply into his 5,000 wagons and walks round the flank of this carefully prepared position. I am particularly anxious not to be misunderstood. I have not the slightest intention, under certain conditions, of denying the very great utility of positions thoroughly prepared and selected long beforehand. Torres Vedras is an instance of their use and value. The lines of Petersburg, occupied by Lee after the Wilderness campaign, are another. But their strength lay in this, that they could not be turned; the line of supply was secure from all attacks, and under such conditions no man in his senses could deny the importance of solidly constructed entrenchments. But there is always the danger—and this is the point on which I am anxious to lay stress—that an army which can manœuvre like the Federal army by day, and especially by night, an army which can carry large supplies, or which can live on the country, or, above all, which has facilities for changing its base, can often set such entrenchments at defiance. A daring general, like Grant, if he is not tightly bound to one line of supply, will remember Napoleon's maxim, 'shun the position in which the

enemy wishes you to attack him, especially that which he has fortified.' Of course it may be said that Lee, in allowing Grant to pass round his flank, and then attacking him in the Wilderness, showed us the best way to deal with such manœuvres. But this was altogether an exceptional case. Lee relied on the difficulty of the battlefield, on the topography with which he was familiar, and of which his opponents knew next to nothing, and could find out nothing. So greatly was Grant hampered by the lack of roads, that he was unable to reach the open country south of Spottsylvania. Had he possessed greater freedom of manœuvre, had he not been compelled to move his enormous train by two indifferent roads, it is extremely probable that he would have intervened between Lee and Richmond, and have met him on ground which offered no peculiar advantage, as did the Wilderness, to the Confederates. I am very strongly of opinion that, as modern armies have much practice in manœuvring, both by day and night, and as their men are trained to long marches, and to movements *en masse*, very careful attention should be directed to the dangers which may arise from the premature selection and occupation of defensive positions. A change of front, especially where large numbers are concerned, if it is to be effected rapidly and in good order, is a most difficult operation. I may notice here the comparative security in which the Federals manœuvred by night across the front and round the flanks of the Confederate army.

The country was very close, and reconnoitring parties could not leave the roads in the darkness, but it is impossible not to avoid the conclusion that if, when we occupy a defensive position, we are not desirous of finding the enemy across our flank when the morning dawns, we must use our very best endeavours to find out what is going on under cover of the night. It certainly strikes one as curious that the Confederates, knowing what they did of Grant's predilection for night marches, should have been unable to detect his movement in retreat across the North Anna. This is one lesson, then, which may be deduced from the Wilderness campaign. Because you have formidable earthworks along your front, you

are not therefore to consider yourself secure. Another lesson is that the entrenchments which were of the most use in this campaign were those which were constructed on the spot, when the direction of the enemy's attack had become apparent. Those at the Wilderness, Spottslyvania, the North Anna, and Cold Harbor were thrown up when the enemy was actually within striking distance, and yet their value was far greater than those on the Rapidan, or, if Grant's subordinates had been more dashing, than those beyond the James.

For those who care to study the campaign closely, it is worth while noting with what skill Lee's positions were selected. His flanks at Spottsylvania, at the North Anna, and at Cold Harbor, were so secured by streams that it was very difficult indeed for his opponent to manœuvre without crossing one of these streams, and so dividing his army. It was not only the entrenchments, but the natural features of the ground also on which Lee relied in his defensive tactics. His eye for ground must have been extraordinary. The campaign was fought over a very large area, an area of very close country, with few marked natural features; and yet in the midst of woods, jungle and streams, with very little time at his disposal, he always seems to have selected positions than which none could have been stronger. His eye for ground, then, had much to do with his successful resistance to Grant's overwhelming numbers; and this eye for ground he possessed in common with all generals who are acknowledged as masters of war. Now, with all respect to the text-books, and to ordinary tactical teaching, I am inclined to think that the study of ground is often overlooked, and that by no means sufficient importance is attached to the selection of positions, to the rapid adaptation of hasty entrenchments to the field of battle, to the recognition of 'tactical' points, *i.e.* 'key points'; and to the immense advantages that are to be derived, whether you are defending or attacking, from the proper utilisation of natural features. There are people who tell you that Napoleon's campaigns are ancient history. 'Read the battles of 1870,' they say, 'visit the fields of 1870. There is no use in studying Napoleon's battlefields, because the ranges were so short.' With those good people I altogether disagree.

Napoleon, like Lee, made such remarkable use of ground that natural features played a very great part in many of his victories, and no one who visits the scenes of some of these victories can fail to learn a very useful lesson; a lesson of great value to every officer who has any aspirations in the direction of independent command, and this lesson is one in generalship. One of the secrets of Napoleon's extraordinary success will be revealed, and these secrets are well worth the learning, for natural features, as we learn from this very campaign, can still be utilised with great effect, and can be utilised in the very same manner as they were by Napoleon.

Speaking for myself, I may say that I had visited the battle-fields of 1870 very often, and studied them very closely, before I visited any one of Napoleon's fields; but it was not until I went to Jena and Austerlitz that I really grasped what an important part an eye for ground like Napoleon's, or blindness as to ground like his opponents', at both of these battles, may play in Grand Tactics, that is, in the art of generalship. When you look at the position of the Allies at Austerlitz, the position that was captured by one of the finest counter-strokes in history, one of the first things you observe is an insignificant village half-way up the little hill which formed the centre of the position. Napoleon's counter-stroke met with such splendid success because when he saw that village and the hill above it he recognised at once the very great advantage which they would give him if he could seize them. To the ordinary observer they do not appear to be an important point, nor did they seem so to the Allies, who altogether rejected them, or, at all events, took no special precautions for their defence. It seems rather a curious thing to say that we can learn the use of ground from books; but to a certain degree we may learn from the campaigns of the great captains how to utilise the ground; we may learn to recognise its importance; and then proceeding to the ground itself, whether at manœuvres in command of troops, or in studying positions alone, we can put theory into practice, and gradually acquire that eye for ground without which no man, it is my firm conviction, can ever hope to be a great or even a useful general.

THE ATTACK ON THE SALIENT

Report of the Corps Commander, General Hancock

I was directed to form my troops for an assault on the enemy's line at 4 A.M. Two officers of my staff accompanied Lieut.-Colonel Comstock of General Grant's staff, to reconnoitre the point which I was instructed to storm, but no very definite information could be obtained. I moved out after dark, under the guidance of an engineer officer, over a narrow and difficult road, under heavy rain, which rendered the marching extremely fatiguing for the men. The head of the column arrived at the Brown House, near which it was proposed to form up for attack, about midnight, the troops getting into position as soon as they came up. The troops were formed in rear of our picket line, about 1,200 yards from the enemy's entrenchments. The ground ascended sharply towards the enemy's lines and was in part thickly wooded. A small watercourse ran parallel to the front of our line. The troops took position quietly and promptly, although it was an unusually dark and stormy night. The direction of the advance was ascertained by compass on the map from the Brown House to a large white house known to be inside the enemy's lines, near the point we wished to strike. The preparations were scarcely completed at daylight. A heavy fog decided me to delay the attack till 4.35 A.M. When the order was given to advance, the 3rd division had some difficulty in making its way through a wood and marsh in its front, but pushed forward overcoming all obstacles and keeping well up with the 1st division, which moved at quick time for several hundred yards, the heavy column marching over the enemy's pickets without firing a shot, regardless of a sharp fire on its left flank from the reserve of the outpost line. It continued up the slope almost half-way to the enemy's lines when the men broke into a tremendous cheer, and spontaneously taking up the double, rolled like an irresistible wave into the enemy's works, tearing away the abattis in front of the entrenchments with their hands, and carrying the line at all points in a few moments, although it was desperately defended. The 1st and 3rd divisions entered almost at the same moment. A fierce and bloody fight ensued in the works with bayonets and clubbed muskets. It was short, however, and resulted in the capture of nearly 4,000 prisoners, 20 pieces of artillery, and upwards of 30 colours, two general officers also were taken. The enemy fled in great confusion and disorder. Their numbers in killed and

wounded were unusually great. The interior of the entrenchments presented a terrible and ghastly spectacle of dead, most of whom were killed with the bayonet. So thickly lay the dead at this point, that at many places the dead bodies were touching and piled upon one another.

From the report of General Brooke, commanding 4th Brigade

Our path lay, first, through a slight thicket, then over an open field, with a slight ascent, the extreme left through a copse of tall pines (which, however, didn't obstruct the march in any material manner), then down a gradual declivity to within 50 yards of the works, then up a sharp ascent for the same distance. The face of this last ascent was covered by abattis, through which it was very difficult to force a way. The enemy opened a terrific fire of musketry and artillery upon us, notwithstanding which our brave men marched on, and dragging away the abattis, poured upon them in one irresistible mass, and after a short, sharp fight, killed and captured nearly all who occupied the works. Those who still resisted were driven in confusion. Never during the war have I seen such desperate fighting. The bayonet was freely used on both sides; the enemy fought desperately and *nothing but the formation of our attack* and the valour of our troops could have carried the works. Not a shot was fired by my men till they mounted the works.

From the report of General Johnson, commanding the defeated Division

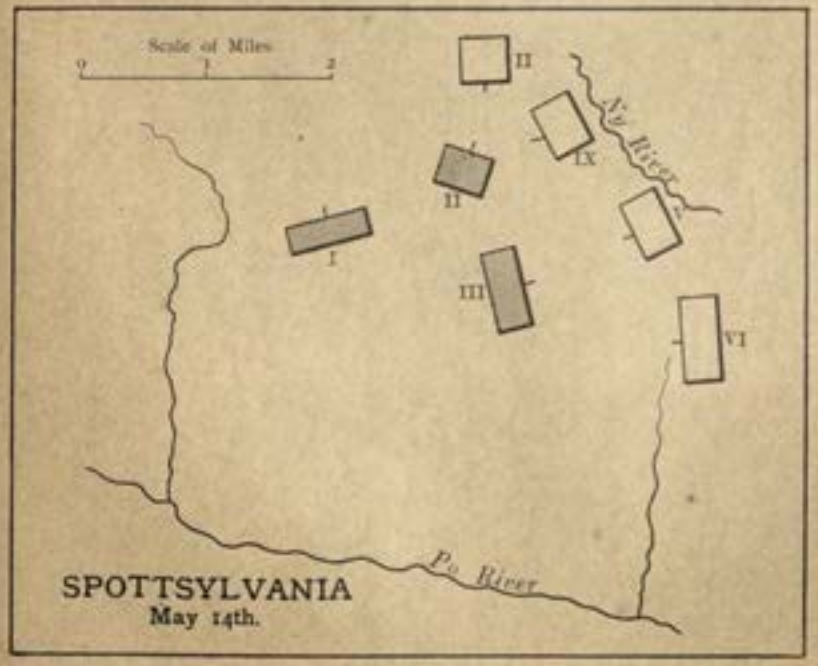
On the night of the 11th (between 10 and 12 o'clock), scouts and officers on the picket line reported that the enemy was moving to his right and concentrating in my front, and all concurred in the opinion that my lines would be assaulted in the morning. I ordered my command to be on the alert, some brigades to be awake all night, and all to be up and in the trenches an hour or so before daylight. The order was obeyed. At the first intimation of the enemy's advance I went to the trenches. Soon after my arrival there, a heavy colnmn assaulted my right. Immediately after this a very heavy column debouched from the pines about half or three-quarters of a mile from my works and advanced upon the Salient. This column came up in large numbers, but in great disorder, with a narrow front, but extending to the rear as far as I could see. There was no surprise. My men were up and in the trenches



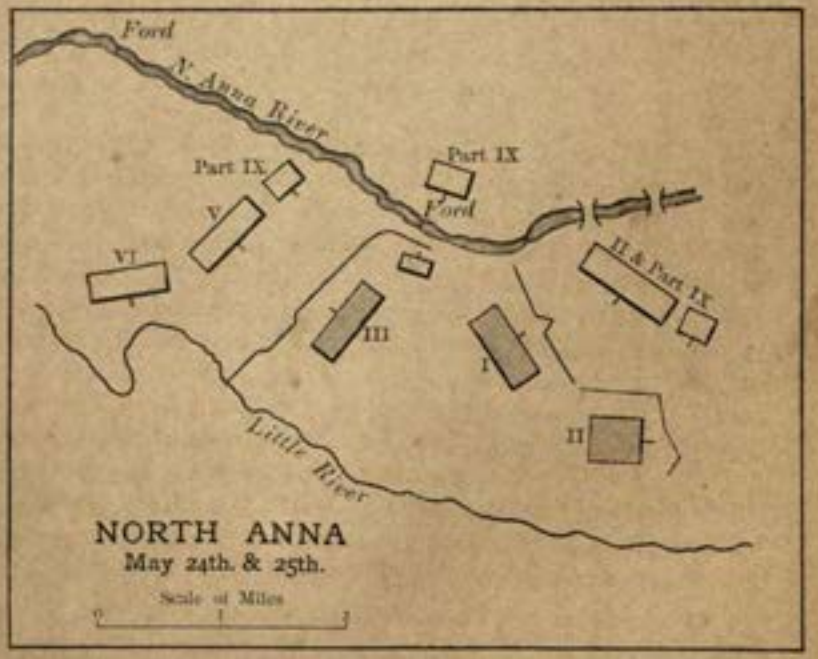
SPOTTSYLVANIA
May 9th. & 10th.
POSITIONS OF ARMY CORPS
Confederates shaded
Scale of Miles
0 1 2



NORTH ANNA
May 23rd.
Scale of Miles
0 1 2



SPOTTSYLVANIA
May 14th.



NORTH ANNA
May 24th. & 25th.
Scale of Miles
0 1 2

prepared for the assault before the enemy made his appearance. The ground was over open fields with abattis in front.

Note by Author

The attacking army corps lost 2,000 men in this day's fight, but captured nearly twice as many, as well as killing and wounding many of the enemy; the numbers of the latter cannot be ascertained, but probably amounted to at least 2,000.

CHAPTER XII

THE TRAINING OF INFANTRY FOR ATTACK

TWENTY-ONE years have elapsed since the last great European conflict, and during this period the progress of invention and of education has brought about important modifications in the methods of civilised and even savage warfare. Yet the experiences of the Russo-Turkish campaign, together with those of '70–'71, still form the basis on which the training of armies is carried out. In almost every essential respect the tactical teaching of 1899 is that of 1878. The battle formations of the three arms have undergone no marked change, and the drill-books present no conspicuous points of difference. But it is not therefore to be understood that the tactical teaching of to-day is antiquated and unprogressive. It is true that within the last ten years fire has become more deadly; that smokeless powder has introduced new difficulties; and that the means of inter-communication, such as visual signalling and the telegraph, are more numerous and more certain than in '78. Yet as regards the effect of those new factors in civilised warfare, although we have very little experience to guide us, it seems safe to assume they will not make the battle of the future very dissimilar to anything that has gone before. It will be certainly less easy to procure information. Deployment must take place at a greater distance. The fire of both infantry and artillery against favourable targets will produce greater results. Frontal and flank attacks will be more easily combined; counter-strokes more easily arranged; and, when troops are exposed to heavy fire, demoralisation will set in at an earlier period. It would be unwise to say more than this. Results obtained on the ranges are no safe guide to results obtained

on the battlefield, and it is very easy to exaggerate the effect of new or improved weapons.

So far as we can judge from such recent experiences as the war between Chili and Peru, the action at Krugersdorp, the campaigns in Thessaly, in Cuba, and on the North-West Frontier, when two forces meet whose armament is equal, the slaughter is not likely to be abnormal. Shrapnel, Maxims, and the small-bore do not seem to increase the butcher's bill to the extent that some would have us believe. The carnage at Omdurman, where the dense masses of the Dervishes, on absolutely open ground, were simply mown down by bullet and shrapnel at long range, was undoubtedly appalling. Out of 20,000 men who took part in the first attack, it has been estimated that 8,000 fell, and only a few riflemen crept up to a point distant 700 yards from the British zeriba. But at St. Privat, in 1870, the French chassepot, together with a muzzle-loading field gun and most indifferent fuses, wrought almost equal havoc. In under half an hour the Prussian Guard lost 4,500 men out of 12,000, and not only were the formations much less dense than those of the Dervishes, but the brigades were supported, to a certain extent, by the fire of their own artillery. Again, in the war of '77–'78, the long-range fire of the Turks caused enormous losses in the Russian columns. General Todleben, the conqueror of Plevna, relates that on one occasion 10,000 men fell without seeing the enemy. Although the accuracy of his figures has been questioned, the assertion is sufficient proof that the death-dealing power of the Turkish Martini was not far inferior to that of the Lee-Metford.

What we may expect, it would seem, is that the methods of war which the increased fire-power of '70 and '77 made necessary will be even more necessary in the future; and that the phenomena it produced will be still more marked. It was found in '70 and '77 that infantry could only attack in open lines; that superiority of fire could only be attained by a close combination at every stage of the attack of infantry and artillery; that reconnaissance was difficult; that the effect of fire against troops in the open was very great, and that cover had assumed a new importance. Inventions and improvements have added

a new force to each of these factors, but they have not eliminated a single one.

We may fairly conclude, then, that the battles of '70–'71 and '77–'78 present in all essential respects true pictures of the fighting of the future; and that, consequently, the training of our troops is based on sound and substantial foundations.

This opinion is not everywhere accepted. Very different ideas are often put forward. But they are put forward, as a rule, by those who are imperfectly acquainted with the history of past campaigns. It is said, for instance, that battles will be of far longer duration in the time to come. Yet the last battle of Plevna was an affair of several days; and to go still further back, we have many instances in the American and Napoleonic wars when victory hung in the balance for two and even three days.

The battles of '70 are not in this respect the best of guides. The great fault in the German tactics at the beginning of the war was a precipitate rush into action, a general neglect of reconnaissance, and an absolute contempt for essential preliminaries, such as a study of the ground, the choice of artillery positions, the deployment of the troops, the formation of the larger units in several lines, the explanation of the plan of battle, and the promulgation of maturely considered orders. The practice of Napoleon and of Wellington, of the great generals of America, of Skobeleff and of Osman, was very different. Whole days of their campaigns were spent in preparation; in collecting information, in examining the positions, in feeling the enemy, in deploying the troops, in selecting the line of attack, and in making everyone familiar with the plan of battle.

Again, we are told that the spade will be far more extensively employed in future wars, and it is tacitly implied that this useful tactical auxiliary has not yet seen its full development. In '70–'71, it is true, entrenchments, especially in the attack, played but an insignificant part. In Bulgaria, however, Osman and Skobeleff showed its real value, and Osman and Skobeleff only imitated the American generals of the Secession War. It can hardly be sustained, then, that the

attack and defence of hastily entrenched positions will be a novelty. It may be admitted, however, that the importance of the spade is often overlooked in peace; and that entrenchments, as a tactical expedient and precaution, and especially as an essential adjunct to attack, do not receive, at field-days and manœuvres, the attention they deserve; and in this respect our tactical training is possibly at fault. Nor is this its only defect.

The reason, however, for such defects is not that the lessons of '70 and '77 are obsolete, but that some have been imperfectly absorbed, and that others have not yet been made clear. This is undoubtedly a somewhat startling statement. No war has been so carefully written up, so minutely analysed, so thoroughly discussed, as that of '70; and although the literature of the Russo-Turkish campaign is less voluminous and less accessible, it is still sufficiently large to give ample occupation to the most indefatigable student. Yet for all that, the lessons generally deduced from these campaigns are not so plain and comprehensive as they might be; and this, it would appear, is due to the fact that, so far as infantry is concerned, attention has been too exclusively confined to a single phase of battle and a single variety of ground, *i.e.* to that phase of battle which intervenes between deployment and the assault, and to ground where the only obstacle to movement is the fire of the enemy.

The attainment of superiority of fire and the breaching of the defenders' line are unquestionably the decisive factors in war; and the methods by which they may be attained, such as suitable formations, the control of fire, the reinforcement of the firing line, and massing in strong force for the final charge, occupy, very properly, the minds of those who look forward to carrying out such operations on actual service. But, as will be explained hereafter, these factors and these methods are not everything, nor is level and unobstructed country the most practical training-ground. In the first place, the attack and assault of a definite position form but a single phase in a protracted series of operations, each of very different character; and, in the second, attack and assault over open ground, although perhaps the most difficult, and certainly the most

costly of manœuvres, is neither an inevitable nor even a usual feature of the battlefield.

It may be argued, however, that, even if this be true, it is essential that the attack over open ground, on account of its great difficulty and hazard, should be the more practised. Quite so; but, at the same time, it shows small knowledge of war to believe that a slope like a glacis, a wide field of fire, and an absence of all covered approaches, are the necessary and the ordinary concomitants of a defensive position. The very contrary is the case. In whatever theatre of war we may find ourselves, positions which possess those desirable attributes, and which, at the same time, are on a line which the enemy is likely to operate, are as rare as the four-leaved shamrock; and it is, therefore, a waste of time to train our infantry too exclusively for the attack and assault over open ground.

Take, for instance, the fields of the Metz campaign. In each of the first great battles, the battles which sealed the fate of France, and which were fought in an unusually open country, woods played a most prominent part; and in four—Woerth, Spicheren, Colombey and Beaumont—the decisive attack was made through dense thickets. The conditions of '77–'78, so far as the fighting round Plevna was concerned, undoubtedly resembled those which are too often supposed to exist on every battlefield; a glacis-like slope and a wide field of fire were the most conspicuous characteristics of Osman's stronghold. But in other parts of the theatre of war, in the Balkans and in Asia, the ground was of a very different character, and hill-fighting, with all its peculiar difficulties, was the rule rather than the exception. We have here a significant fact, and a most useful warning. In the same campaign, on the same theatre of war, and even on the same battlefield, it is exceedingly probable that we shall find two absolutely distinct sets of conditions.

It would be going too far to say that different conditions necessitate absolutely different formations, or absolutely different methods of leading; for the same principles hold good in all infantry fighting. Whatever the ground may be like, a position must be attacked in several lines, and the greatest depth must

be opposite the point of assault. But diversity of ground demands a marked diversity in such details as distances, intervals, frontage, and the means of maintaining connection and control. And if we endeavour to apply the lesson to ourselves, we shall find we are face to face with a very serious question. What conditions are we likely to have to deal with when we take the field? What sort of ground will our battalions be called on to attack over in their next campaign? Will it be open ground or close, desert or jungle, plain or mountain, swamp or waterless, barren or well cultivated? He would be a bold man who would venture to predict. The attempt would be as useless as to guess at the quality, the tactics, or even the colour, of our next enemy.

But the deductions to be drawn are:—first, that, more than any other, the British army has to be prepared for fighting over every kind of country, just as it has to be prepared to meet every known form of tactics. And, second, that even against a civilised enemy, whom we fairly assume to be a more formidable foe than even the bravest and wiliest of savages, attack and counter-attack will have to be delivered over broken ground far more frequently than over a glacis-like slope. But how is it possible, it may be asked, to familiarise our troops in peace with the infinite variety of surroundings they may meet on service? Where are the woods, the mountains, the swamps, the jungles, the desert, the waterless and roadless tracts over which they may practise mimic war? And even if such tracts were available, would they be identical with those we may have to fight upon? Woods, for instance, vary much in character. The beechwood has little in common with the oak; the hazel-covert with the forest of pines. And so mountains vary, in steepness, in height, in ruggedness.

How, then, is our infantry to be trained?

There are various methods. Some will tell you that all that can be done is to rely on good discipline and good shooting, to practise a normal formation, and thus ensure uniformity; others, that special formations must be adopted under special conditions; but that the formations and methods of leading suitable to each different case should be laid down by authority.

All systems, however, which depend on explicit regulations make but small demands on the intelligence of the individual officer, and for that reason, if for no other, they are quite inadequate to the exigencies of modern warfare. I will support my opinion by three instances drawn from practical experience.

I was once standing on the battlefield at Woerth, with a German officer, discussing the subject of infantry training, and in order to explain his objection to normal formations, he referred to his own experiences on that very field.

'Before the war,' he said, 'my regiment and brigade had been very thoroughly trained, but always over open ground and in stereotyped formation. Woerth was our first experience of battle, and you may imagine our embarrassment, accustomed as we were to ground which had few obstructions, when we were ordered to advance against the French flank through the dense and pathless wood which lies in front of you. The formation to which we were accustomed was evidently unsuitable. But we had very little time in which to devise a substitute, or to consider the way in which we should advance; and it ended in our sending forward a strong chain of skirmishers, with their supports, and breaking up the remainder of the brigade into several columns. As you know,' he went on, 'we found the enemy in the middle of the wood, very strongly posted along the edge of a clearing, and in large numbers, and we made no progress until his flank was turned by other troops.' 'Still,' I said, 'you seem to have done all that could be expected from you. You kept your direction; the men were well in hand; and there was no disorder or loss of tactical unity until the fighting got to close quarters, and the enemy began his successive counter-strokes.' 'Quite true,' he replied; 'we certainly did well for young and inexperienced soldiers; and the reason was that, although we had spent the greater part of our time in practising a normal formation, our officers, including the captains and subalterns, were used to responsibility; they had been to a certain extent trained to exercise their own judgment, and to devise methods of overcoming unexpected difficulties, without continually asking for orders. This pulled us through. *But we should have done far better*

had we been more practised in skirmishing, and had as much care been taken to develop the judgment of our officers as to maintain the correct distances in the normal formation. That normal formation, I may say, we never attempted throughout the war. On almost every occasion where my regiment was seriously engaged, we fought either in a wood, a village, or in enclosed country, and for neither of these was it in the least adapted.'

The second illustration comes from the experience of a regimental officer on the North-West Frontier of India.

'We at once found out,' he says, 'the deficiencies of our peace training. In the first place, the system of attack (or rather, the systems, for we had recently changed stations, and come under a new general) which we had taken so much trouble to learn, was quite out of place in the hills. In the second place, we had not been in action five minutes before we found that volley-firing was useless, for the targets never remained long enough in position for us to go through all the elaborate preliminaries. In the third place, companies, and even sections, had to a great extent to fight their own battles, for it was impossible to supervise them, and sometimes even to see them; and lastly, both officers and men were very much at sea in the skirmishing tactics which the ground made necessary. As regards this last, I must acknowledge that all were not tarred with the same brush, and some regiments, notably several belonging to the native army, were at home from the first. But, so far as I can learn, these regiments had received a thorough light infantry training; their officers, as almost all the officers of the native army are, were accustomed to responsibility, and many of the men were highlanders born and bred. Anything better than the skirmishing of the Guides, and of the Pathan companies of the 20th P.I., I never wish to see. I pity the Russians that come across them in their native hills. You must not understand, however, that I have the smallest intention of running down the British regimental officers and men. If they were puzzled at first; if company officers, and even regimental commanders, betrayed a good deal of "stickiness," hesitated to act for themselves, and when they did so act, often

went too far; if the men did not show the same capacity for looking after themselves as their comrades of the good native regiments, it was the fault of their training; and in proof of how good our material is, it was perfectly astonishing to see the way in which, after a little experience, both officers and men adapted themselves to their most difficult and, in a sense, demoralising surroundings. After a few days' fighting, Tommy Atkins was nearly as clever a skirmisher, although hardly so agile, as his Pathan comrade. But, of course, while he was learning his business, the losses were both heavy and unnecessary, and this is certainly a reflection on our system of training. What we want are the following :—

'1. Regimental officers, including company commanders, to be left more to themselves on field days.

'2. An extended course of physical training, jumping, running, climbing, crossing obstacles, &c.

'3. Practice as light infantry over difficult ground.

'4. Careful instruction of the individual skirmisher.'

My last illustration comes from the Peninsular War, but it is by no means the least valuable. Throughout Wellington's campaigns the Light Brigade formed a permanent outpost line and covering force. It took up these duties almost immediately on landing; and whether as skirmishers in the woods and mountains of Portugal and Spain, or as part of the regular line of battle, the famous regiments which composed it were without their equals in either the French or the British armies. Two points call for special attention. First: these regiments, when they joined Sir Arthur Wellesley after Talavera, were young, inexperienced soldiers, and yet their remarkable efficiency was at once apparent. Second: the fighting in which they made their name, on the rugged heights of the Coa, amid the sierras of Portugal, and in the attack and defence of the stupendous heights of the Pyrenees, bears a very striking resemblance to the fighting on the North-West Frontier and in Afghanistan. Two questions, therefore, are at once suggested :—

1. To what system of instruction did these regiments owe their remarkable efficiency?

2. Would not this system, which produced skill in skirmishing, with steadiness in the line of battle, be the most effective means of training the British infantry of to-day for its multifarious duties?

An answer to the first may be found in the writings of officers who served in the Light Brigade during the Peninsular War. Unfortunately the system of instruction is nowhere minutely described, but by collating and comparing the statements of many contemporary writers, and by studying the records and standing orders of the three regiments, the causes of the high standard of efficiency which resulted may be easily arrived at. They are as follows:—

1. The correct habits of command instilled into the regimental officers, and the training of their judgment.
2. The physical training of the soldier.
3. Practice as light infantry over difficult ground.
4. The careful instruction of the individual skirmisher.

We have here the curious fact that the standard aimed at by Sir John Moore at Shorncliffe Camp, in 1803, was identical with that laid down by an officer who saw active service on the Indian frontier in 1898, and we may reply to the second question, therefore, by saying that the system under which the Light Brigade became so famous is the most effective means of training the British infantry of to-day. It should never be forgotten that on such ground as was available near an ordinary English station, Sir John Moore's command was so trained that in a far more difficult country, a country of rocks and ravines, of lofty precipices and barren uplands, neither officers nor men were ever caught at a disadvantage.

But there is more to be learned from the training of the Light Brigade than this. The secret of its efficiency lay, not so much in the constant exercise on the green downs by Cæsar's Camp, in physical training, and in the careful instruction of the individual skirmishers, as *in the inculcating of correct habits of command in the regimental officers*. Those who have had occasion to study in contemporary records the manner in which the officers of the brigade handled their men throughout the innumerable engagements of the Peninsular War, need no

further evidence to convince them that it was to the skill, the resolution, and the trained judgment of these officers that the success of the brigade is in the main to be attributed. Their most marked characteristics were that when they were left alone they almost invariably did the right thing; that they had no hesitation in assuming responsibility; that they could handle their regiments and companies, if necessary, as independent units; and that they consistently applied the great principle of mutual support. It seems perfectly clear, therefore, that Sir John Moore and the colonels of the Light Brigade intended, when they instituted their system of discipline, of instruction, and of command, *to form in the persons of their company officers a body of intelligent and zealous assistants, capable of carrying out their plans and anticipating their wishes*; and not merely a body of docile subordinates capable of obeying orders to the letter, but untrained to resolute initiative.

This is a point on which too great stress can hardly be laid. If you recall the words of the officers already quoted, of the German who fought in 1870–1, and of the Englishman who fought the Afridis, you will find the same idea running throughout. The good results in the one case, the less good results in the other, are stated to be due to the previous training of the officers; and this, it would appear, is one of the lessons of the '70–'71, '77–'78 campaigns which has been imperfectly absorbed. It has not been ignored; the Drill-book is clear enough:—

'Commanders of all ranks, from generals to section commanders, must carefully bear in mind that in war it is impossible for them to exercise over their commands the same personal control that finds place at drill exercises. Delegation of command is a necessity, and commanders must, therefore, take every opportunity of training their subordinates in accepting responsibility for departures from, or variations in, the mode of carrying out orders or directions originally given, impressing on them at the same time that such departures or variations must always be justified by the circumstances of the case. The conditions of modern warfare render it imperative

that all ranks should be taught to think, and, subject to general instructions and accepted principles, to act for themselves.'

Nor has the lesson failed to find acceptance by the majority of generals and commanding officers. But that it is not universally appreciated is sufficiently proved by the criticisms passed on the regimental and company leading by officers who took part in the Tirah campaign. Remember what I said were the most marked characteristics of Sir John Moore's officers: '*When they were left alone they almost invariably did the right thing. They had no hesitation in assuming responsibility. They could handle their regiments and companies, if necessary, as independent units; and they consistently applied the great principle of mutual support.*' It is an exceedingly ungrateful task to criticise, even in the smallest degree, the operations of a campaign so brilliantly conducted as that in the Afridi highlands; but unless we take note of the mistakes we can expect no progress. War is the school where we must all learn, whether the experience is our own or others'. Moreover, the instructions on hill-warfare recently issued in India, and the manœuvres instituted at hill-stations, show plainly enough that the highest authorities in India consider that improvements in our infantry training may still be made.

The characteristics of Light Infantry fighting may be briefly described.

1. The men must be accustomed to work at any interval and in any formation that may be ordered.

2. Accuracy and regularity, except in maintaining the direction and a rough general line, are not demanded.

3. The section will be the unit of command, but it will work in due co-operation with the remainder of the company, and the company will keep touch with the battalion.

4. The section will be divided into two sub-sections or groups, and every group will endeavour to render support to those on either hand.

5. The section will move in such fashion as circumstances dictate, either by rushes, by creeping up, in quick time, or at the double. It is often desirable that a few men should creep up at a time.

'At the Nivelle on November 10th, 1813, the line of the French main position was in front of the regiment with an intervening rocky watercourse, which, it would seem, was deemed impassable by our enemies. The 52nd moved to the small open ravine and wood in their front under a smart fire of artillery from the ridge next to be assailed. In front of this wood, the watercourse was crossed by a small and narrow stone bridge, on the opposite side of which was a wood running parallel to the watercourse, with a sheltered bank towards the enemy. The officers and men of the 52nd *crept by twos and threes* to the edge of the wood, and then dashing over a hundred yards of open ground, passed the bridge, and formed behind the bank, which was not more than eighty yards from the enemy's entrenchment. The signal was then given; *the rough* line sprang up the bank and the enemy gave way.' ('Records of the 52nd Light Infantry.')

6. In moving either to front or rear every man will endeavour, without crowding on his comrades, to expose himself as little as possible to the enemy's fire.

At the fight at Gausimas, in Cuba, an eyewitness thus describes the advance of the Rough Riders under heavy fire :—

'It was easy to tell which men were used to hunting big game in the West, and which were not, by the way they made their rushes. The Eastern men broke at the word, and ran for the cover they were directed to take, like men trying to get out of the rain, and lay panting on their faces, while the Western trappers and hunters slipped and wriggled through the grass like Indians; dodging from tree-trunk to tree-trunk, and from bush to bush. They always fell into line at the same time with the others, but they had not exposed themselves while doing so.'

7. Every man, when ordered to halt, must make the best use of the cover that he finds before him.

This is a most important point. An officer, who served in the campaigns in South Africa[1] and on the North-West Frontier, writes as follows :—

'Attention should be particularly directed to the training of infantry in shooting from behind cover accurately and

[1] The campaign of 1881 is here referred to.—Ed.

rapidly without exposing themselves. The Boers and some of the natives of South Africa, and also most Pathans, excel in this art, whereas the average British infantryman usually exposes *half* his body to the view of his enemy, and frequently puts himself into such position that he can neither aim accurately nor shoot quickly. This is one of the criticisms most frequently heard among the Boers and colonists of South Africa.'

8. Whenever independent fire is ordered every man, as a rule, will choose his own target.

9. The men must be accustomed to the intermixture of sections, companies, and battalions.

'The true summit of perfection,' says a veteran of the Light Brigade, 'is the preservation of order in disorder, and of system in confusion; for the circumstances which accompany skirmishes of necessity produce, almost always, more or less mixture, inversion, and general irregularity. In hot contests over large extents of intricate ground, men of different companies, regiments, brigades, and even divisions, mingle with each other. Soldiers should therefore be drilled, not indeed to fall into such irregularities on principle, but to be ready for them in practice. Soldiers who have not been drilled on this principle, or who have not acquired it by experience, are, when extended under fire, transformed into unmanageable mobs. Skirmishers who understand it will always show a formidable front, and, under the worst possible circumstance, act together in the mighty energy of mutual confidence. Unreflecting mechanical precision is at direct variance with such practice. Active intelligence and a wise well-defined general system are its component elements. Active intelligence, therefore, in every point of view, is invaluable to the skirmisher; and the attention of all drill superintendents and instructors should be unremittingly directed to stamp it on his mind and mix it with his practice.'

10. They must be trained to observe and report on the movements of the enemy, thus using their intelligence to assist their section leader.

11. The men should be trained to concentrate rapidly at any point the section leader may indicate. If there is some

spot to the front whence the section, while sheltered itself, can bring an effective fire to bear upon the enemy's line, a rush will be made for it.

12. They should be trained to extend as they leave cover, even when rushing from one shelter to another.

13. They must be taught that when their leaders are down, or when the tactical unity of their companies and sections has become dissolved, they are still to go on fighting, maintaining their ground or pushing forward as the case may be, but always seeking to combine with others, and to use their rifles to the best effect.

That a wider knowledge of light infantry duties, and an aptitude, increased by practice, for independent leading, will be of far higher value to the army than some suspect, is not difficult of demonstration. More formidable foes than the Afridi may have to be encountered on the North-West Frontier of India. There is the most vulnerable, and, I might almost say, the most vital, point of the British Empire. There we may have to fight for our very existence as a great nation and a first-class power. So in preparing for service against the border tribes, and in practising hill tactics, we shall be preparing for campaigns which may decide the fate of England, and practising the very tactics which will be the best adapted to the theatre of war.

And to go further afield than India. In training our officers and men as light infantry after Sir John Moore's model, we shall be giving them the best training to fit them for battle, on whatever ground it may be fought. The fields of '70–'71 show us that the characteristics of light infantry are as necessary on the glacis-like slope as in hills and forests. People too often run away with the idea that an attack over open ground will resemble the trim, orderly advance that we see at manœuvres. They do not always realise that, after a certain time, control must inevitably pass into the hands of the subordinate leaders; that under the stress and roar of fire the issue of orders will be impossible; that the company officers will be left to themselves, and that they will be called upon to use their own judgment and assume heavy responsibility.

Let us look for a moment on the picture of a protracted struggle for superiority of fire, as illustrated by the battles of '70 or '77. No regular lines are here, although the initial deployment may have been methodical enough, but a series of groups, more or less connected by scattered skirmishers; and these groups maintain no even front, but follow the irregularities of the ground and the fluctuations of the fight. At one place they have been driven back by a counter-stroke; at another they are checked by an advanced post; at another they are pressing forward, impelled by timely reinforcements; at another the hostile fire is so fierce that it is impossible to face it, and there is a great gap, of which the enemy may at any moment take advantage; at another a roll of the ground affords some cover, and knots of men are eagerly pressing on to decisive range. Companies, battalions, even brigades and regiments, have become mixed up, for it has been necessary to throw in supports and reserves where they are most wanted, without regard for tactical unity. Many officers have fallen. Some of the groups are led by young subalterns, and some are without leaders at all; and yet it is impossible to send orders to any part of the line. Just as direction by superiors is impossible in woods, on mountain-sides, and in villages because the greater part of the troops cannot be seen, or if seen are not within reach of messages, so in open ground it is impossible by reason of the enemy's fire. In one case as in the other the subordinate leaders will find themselves left to their own resources; in one case as in the other much will depend on the intelligence, the skill, and the readiness of the individual skirmisher.

But, as already said, the attack and assault of a defined position form only a single phase of battle. Let us again revert to the pictures of battles provided by the campaigns of '70–'77. Let us imagine that superiority of fire has been attained; that, by the combined efforts of the infantry and the field batteries, the enemy's musketry has been beaten down. His men no longer aim. His artillery is silent. Part of his force is retreating; and his reserves are still distant. A determined rush, preceded by the approach of the second line, or even the third line, if the second has been exhausted in reinforcing the

first, carries the assailants across the trenches, and the enemy everywhere gives way. But he has not yet abandoned hope. Because he has lost his position he does not at once determine to retreat. On the contrary, the battle is very far from a decision. The assailant has forced the defender from his chosen ground, but a second, and perhaps a stronger, position has already been occupied. Village after village, wood after wood, ridge after ridge, have still to be stormed before the victory is complete, and the great end of battle, the annihilation of a hostile force, has been achieved.

This is no fanciful picture. Almost without exception the battles of 1870 became sooner or later running fights; and before the day was definitely over the enemy had to be dispossessed of several successive positions. Take as an instance the operations of the 11th German Army Corps against the French right at the battle of Woerth. The first attack was made on the ridge which formed part of the French main line. The second was made through a wood a mile wide, the enemy offering a stubborn resistance. The third was made on a copse on the further side of the wood. The fourth on a village strongly occupied and prepared for defence. The fifth on another and a still stronger village. From the time the troops came under fire until the last charge they marched over three miles and they fought every step of the way. Nor was the capture of these successive positions, although the French were in inferior numbers, an easy task. Time after time they were seized only to be lost. The enemy's counter-strokes were most effective. Before the Germans could establish themselves in the woods or villages they were almost invariably driven back; and the attack and the assaults had to be repeated, sometimes more than once, before the ground could be considered as permanently occupied. This give and take of heavy blows threw the great weight of responsibility on the leaders of the fighting line. It was on them that depended the making good of the captured positions and the defeat of the counter-strokes, or, if these were successful, the quick return to the attack. And for such work as this the German officers, owing to their peace-training, were eminently qualified. What says Moltke

of the battles before Metz? '*The self-dependence of the subordinate commanders, so thoroughly inculcated by the peace manœuvres, in conjunction with a well-grounded training of the individual, here asserted themselves with all their advantages.*'

It is to be remembered, too, that the German officers, like those of the Light Brigade, were trained not only to accept responsibility, but to make use of ground, and this last is a most important item in light infantry training. When troops are exercised only in a normal formation the importance of ground is apt to receive less consideration than the maintenance of order, regularity, and fire discipline; and officers pay more attention to the behaviour of their men than to tactical features and the action of the enemy. In action, however, especially at close ranges, or in broken country, the order must be reversed if success is to be attained. Officers must watch the enemy as a swordsman watches the eye of his opponent, and at the same time they must take note of the ground over which they are passing, or have yet to pass, marking the cover, the obstacles, the rallying points, the places swept by the hottest fire, and the dangerous features on the flanks. To devise methods of utilising, or crossing, or occupying these points will take all the time they can spare from their scrutiny of the enemy, and they will have neither leisure nor opportunity to supervise the conduct of the individual private. The soldier, as Moltke implies, must have received such careful training that he will be able to act for himself, so far as his movements within the section are concerned. He must have learned for himself to keep a general line, to maintain direction, to utilise cover, trees, rocks, or banks, just as he has learned to aim and to obey. I have always been impressed with the silence with which the attack is conducted at foreign manœuvres compared with our own. Foreign officers who have visited Aldershot have remarked the difference, and have detected the cause. I remember one of them saying that our men did not seem to be able to act for themselves, but that they always required some one to tell them what to do; and it is evident that if officers have to look closely after their men, they will have little time to give to a consideration either of the ground or of the enemy.

These notes are undoubtedly very general, and it may possibly be said that while it is certainly true that the tactical judgment of officers should be trained during peace, very little light has been thrown on the methods to be followed; and, more than all, that very little has been said as regards the rules which troops acting as light infantry should follow on a modern battlefield. It is not, however, because my experience is small that I have confined myself to the mere enunciation of principles. It would have been easy to collect the opinions of men well qualified to lay down rules, if such a course were either practical or profitable. But it is neither. In the first place, the secret of efficiency lies in the self-dependence, the resource, and the resolution of the company and section leaders. How will mere rules assist a commanding officer to instil those habits into his subordinates? Such habits are only to be fostered by constantly placing the company officers in situations where they have to think and act for themselves, by encouraging them to use their wits, to adapt their formation to the ground, to improvise means of overcoming difficulties and to become zealous assistants rather than unreflecting machines. In the second place, circumstances will be different in every different case. What is to be done must depend on the enemy, on his tactics, his armament, his *moral*, on the nature of the ground, the state of the weather, and on many other things. In light infantry work the methods of the attack, *i.e.* the formation, the means of working from cover to cover, and of developing an effective fire, must be improvised on the spot. They must be the outcome of trained judgment, of an instructive appreciation of correct principles, and of well-practised common sense. Objections have been raised to such teaching. It has been suggested, notwithstanding the splendid history of the Light Brigade, that our officers are incapable of applying mere principles with the same cool intelligence as their forefathers, and that they must have definite rules for all sorts of situations. But it may be asked whether the fighting in Tirah, where, when once they understood what was demanded of them, the regimental officers and men displayed such sterling qualities, does not give the lie direct to so weak an argument?

Let us refer for a moment to the sister service. No manual has ever been issued which pretends to teach the naval officer how he is to fight his ship. There are rules for the manœuvres of the fleet, but there are none for the handling of the ship in action. Yet who is there who would not place implicit trust in the trained judgment of 'Nelson's children'? And who is there who would say that the British military officer is of less value as a fighting man than his brother of the sea? If he be so—an opinion to which, with all my admiration for the navy, I should be indeed loth to subscribe—the fault must lie in his training, and his training alone.

In the third place, what good can come from laying down a multitude of rules and regulations? Rules and regulations, so far as tactics are concerned, may have a certain amount of value if those who have to carry them out are under the constant supervision of those who make them. Mechanical perfection, to a greater or less degree, can certainly be produced. But mechanical perfection, or rather, the effort made to reach it, ends in paralysing the judgment; it is altogether inimical to the free exercise of an intelligent initiative, and in no way adapted to the needs of war.

Moreover, the conviction may be here expressed that, to a very great extent, the efficiency of the army depends much more upon those who are immediately concerned with the training of the troops than upon the Horse Guards. The impulse towards improvement may come from above, but if its force is to be felt it must be met more than half way from below. Is it too much to ask of brigadiers and commanding officers what is asked of their naval brethren? Why should educated and experienced soldiers, familiar as they must be with the aspects of battle, be incapable of training those under them to meet its vicissitudes? Wherein does the commander of a battalion differ, except that his responsibilities are far less, from the commander of a battleship? Why should he want minute rules and stringent regulations to guide his knowledge and common sense? His task is indeed difficult. He knows not against what enemy, or on what continent, he may be called upon to lead his men. He has to train his command to meet

the tactics of the savage, as well as the tactics of the regular. He has to be prepared for South Africa, and all that may face him there; for the barren rocks of Afghanistan, as well as for the lanes and hedgerows of England. Yet who, for all that, will assert that the task which Sir John Moore and his subordinates so successfully achieved is beyond the powers of their descendants?

It is by no means implied that the staff should be relieved of the most important of its functions. Far from it. Supervision, close and constant—supervision which respects the chain of responsibility, which does not degenerate into interference, but is occupied more with enforcing principles than details, and with training the judgment of the officers rather than correcting the work of the men—is always its first duty. But no amount of supervision on the part of the staff will compensate for the lack of intelligence and zealous initiative on the part of a commanding officer. And if he would lead his men with credit he must have thought out for himself the problems of modern fighting, the difficulties of command, of maintaining discipline, and of ensuring good leading amongst his subordinates, before he takes the field. The more he knows about the tactics of his probable enemies the better he will be prepared; and it is on his own judgment, on his knowledge of war, on his common sense, that he must rely, not on a mere mechanical obedience to the precepts of the Drill-book. The Drill-book should be accepted for what it is intended to be, and not for what it is sometimes assumed to be.

When troops find themselves on service under conditions with which their ordinary training has done nothing to familiarise them, and to which their ordinary formations are absolutely inapplicable, a cry is at once raised against the Drill-book. At one time, when the losses in desert fighting have been severe, it has been, 'Why does not the Drill-book teach us something about savage warfare?' At another, when the foe has been a mountaineer, 'Why does not the Drill-book teach us how to fight in the hills?' The next time it may be, 'Why does not the Drill-book teach us how to fight in the jungles of Africa, or in the swamps of China?' I think, however, that by anyone

who looks at war as a whole, and who bears in mind the constant variety of ground, of climate, and of tactics with which our soldiers have to do, such complaints against the official teaching will hardly be approved. The Drill-book does not pretend to be an exhaustive tactical treatise. It is nothing more than a compendium of principles adapted to almost every kind of warfare. It lays down a few rules for the most difficult of all operations, the attack and assault of a defined position over open ground, but that is all. It does not attempt to show how these rules must be modified under other conditions, for these conditions, as we have already seen, are so infinitely diversified that it would be manifestly impossible in one small volume to deal with them in detail.

It should be thoroughly understood, then, that the Drill-book was never intended to be the sole guide to the training of the troops for war. Such training would be very far from thorough if those in immediate charge were merely content to follow the rules therein laid down. The authorities expect that intelligent and zealous initiative on the part of both staff and regimental officers of which mention has been already made, and of what may be effected by such initiative we may take two examples. In the year 1808, Wellington, with an army of 18,000, landed in Portugal, and on August 25 he beat the French at Vimiero. The battle is remarkable, not only because it was the first of that great and unbroken series of victories which was to end at Waterloo, but because on the very eve of the engagement the British troops were ordered to adopt a new formation. While he was still in India, Wellington had followed with keen interest the progress of the French armies which were overrunning Europe. He had taken careful note of their tactics, of their habit of attacking in column, covered by a cloud of skirmishers; and it is said that his anxiety to get home was due to the fact that he had thought out the way of defeating them, and was eager to put it to the test. The method he devised was not, to all appearance, a very marked departure from the normal practice of the British infantry. It was in no way an infringement of the great principle—*i.e.* the line formation on which the normal practice was based. On

the contrary, it was a wider and more vigorous application of that principle than had hitherto obtained. But, at the same time, it was in direct antagonism to the teaching of the Drill-book. The edition of the Drill-book published in 1808, the same year as Vimiero, contains the following :—

'The fundamental order of the infantry in which they should always form and act, and for which all their various operations and movements are calculated, is in three ranks. The formation in two ranks is to be regarded as an occasional exception that may be made where an extended and covered front is to be occupied, or where an irregular enemy, who deals only in fire, is to be opposed. But from the present low establishment of our battalions they are, during the time of peace, permitted, in order to give more extent of front in their operations, to continue to form and use it in many of their movements and firings, at the same time not omitting frequently to practise them in three ranks. The formation in two ranks and at open files is calculated only for light troops in the attack and pursuit of a timid enemy, but not for making an impression on an opposing regular line which vigorously assails or resists. No general could manage a considerable army if formed and extended in this manner. The great science and object of movement being to act with superiority on chosen points, it is never the intention of an able commander to have all his men at the same time in action ; he means by skill and manœuvre to attack a part, and to bring the many to act against the few. This cannot be accomplished by any body at open file and two deep. A line formed in this manner would never be brought to make, or to stand, an attack with bayonets, nor could it have any prospect of resisting the charge of a determined cavalry. In no service is the fire and consistency of the third rank to be given up; for the third line serves to fill up the vacancies made in the others in action. Without it the battalion would soon be in a single rank.'

Yet, notwithstanding these explicit instructions, notwithstanding the somewhat scornful rejection of all other formation but that in three ranks, Wellington, on the eve of Vimiero, deliberately ordered that his infantry should fight in line two

deep. We have proof, then, that Wellington, while still a young brigadier, studied the tactics of a possible enemy; that he was not content with following the rules of the Drill-book, although he paid due respect to the principles it inculcated; and that he had thought out for himself the problems he was likely to encounter on his next field of battle.

Again, I think there can be little question but that Sir John Moore, when in command of the Light Brigade at Shorncliffe, did exactly the same thing. Europe was ringing with the fame of the French skirmishers. The astonishing victories of Napoleon were due in a great part, putting strategy aside, to the efficiency of his light infantry, who found an easy prey in the three and even four-deep lines or dense columns, unprotected by skirmishers, of Continental armies. To meet the French voltigeurs on equal terms was the object with which the troops at Shorncliffe were trained on the lines I have described; and it may be noted that when Sir John Moore began his work the Drill-book recognised neither skirmishers nor light infantry. So we have another great English general going beyond the Drill-book, training his troops on a system he himself evolved, and supplementing the rules laid down for his guidance from the resources of his own ability.

Such intelligent co-operation in the work of instruction is what the authorities demand from every commanding officer, whether of a regiment or a company; it is well to remember that in the case of Wellington and Moore the co-operation became effective from the fact that they made themselves acquainted with the tactics of foreign armies. This is a lesson which we may take to heart. It is said sometimes that English soldiers need not trouble themselves about military systems beyond the seas; but such teaching seems hardly based on common sense. It may be true that we have not much to learn from others, and that the Continental systems are adapted neither to our national character nor our military traditions. Nevertheless, those who are best acquainted with European armies are aware that each has special excellencies which are well worth consideration, Moreover, ignorance or contempt of foreign tactics has before now done much to bring about great

national disasters. I shall not pause to dilate on the cost to England of the ignorance of the tactics of the Zulu, the Boer, and the Afridi, but I will refer to the conquest of Prussia in 1806, a conquest attended with far greater disgrace and humiliation than the conquest of France in '70–'71. It was well known in the Prussian army of that date that war with Napoleon was inevitable. There was ample time for preparation; and the tactics best adapted to meet the French infantry had been discussed publicly and privately by the many able and highly educated officers which the army contained. Memorial after memorial was submitted, which proved to conviction that Napoleon's soldiers owed the major part of their success to their skill as skirmishers, to their clever use of cover, to the elasticity of their formations, to the rapidity of their movements, and to their individual intelligence. Proposal after proposal was put forward that the small force of Prussian light infantry should be largely augmented, that more freedom should be given to their movements, and that the fire of the line of battle should be very largely developed. But other influences prevailed. An irrational confidence in the formation which had served Frederick the Great under very different conditions, an overweening pride in Prussian staunchness and Prussian discipline, and a contemptuous disregard of foreign methods successfully obstructed the path of reform. Had Wellington and Moore been equally narrow-minded the Peninsular War would in all probability be a far less glorious tale. The Prussians before '70 made no such mistake as their ancestors had done in 1806. That great fighting soldier, Prince Frederick Charles, published privately in 1864, for the use of the army corps which he commanded, a pamphlet entitled 'The Art of Fighting the French'; and there can be no doubt that the admirable teaching therein contained had spread far and wide through the army before war was declared. The Russians, on the other hand, had done very little before '77 to modify their traditional system. They had but imperfectly absorbed the lesssons of the Franco-German campaign. Their formations were solid, clumsy, and inelastic. The paramount importance of attaining the superiority of fire was not understood; nor had the subordinate

leaders been trained to use their judgment, or to exercise an intelligent initiative. There was indeed an exception, but he stands alone, like a single star in a clouded sky: Skobeleff, the close student of history, the close observer of foreign armies; Skobeleff, the thinker, as well as the great leader of men.

For two reasons particular stress is laid on this point. First, because English soldiers in this respect are somewhat inclined to insularity; and such an attitude may have ill effects. For instance, among Continental armies, almost without exception, counter-strokes, local and general, are a conspicuous feature of every field-day, and counter-strokes, local and general, will be a conspicuous feature of every battle in which they may be engaged. So far as my own experience goes, and I have seen a great deal of our manœuvres at home for the last ten years, the very contrary is the case with ourselves. Counter-strokes of any character are of very rare occurrence, although it is laid down in the Drill-book that they are the chief reliance of the defence, and that no opportunity of making them, at any period of the battle, should be neglected. There is hardly need to dwell on the embarrassment of troops who had never been trained to expect counter-strokes if they were to encounter an enemy who constantly practised them; nor to point out the increased difficulties of hill-fighting when the Afridi learns, as learn he will—for he is a progressive fighting-man, already alive to the value of combination—to follow up his accurate fire with a Ghazi rush against a vulnerable point.

It seems evident, then, that to train our infantry as it should be trained it is incumbent on those who are responsible for that training—and officers of all ranks are included—to make themselves familiar, as did Wellington and Sir John Moore, with the tactics of our possible enemies. This duty falls principally on the staff, and it is not neglected. The Intelligence Department, constantly publishing descriptions of foreign armies, sets an admirable example and furnishes the material for the necessary study. But here, again, intelligent co-operation is needed. One of the principal duties of the staff on a foreign station is to keep a close eye on the tactics

of the people beyond the frontier, and to summarise the results of their observations for the benefit of the whole army. Nor should staff officers at home think that this is a duty with which they have no concern; while regimental officers may rest assured that the more they know about the tactics of our possible enemies, the better will they be prepared to meet them, and the sounder and more efficient will be the training of their men. And, as shown by the example of the Light Brigade, it is not essential that there should be detailed rules for every kind of fighting, or that the troops should be exercised over every variety of country. The four things necessary are:

1. To train the judgment of the officers, so that when left to themselves they may do the right thing.
2. To make use of the most difficult ground available.
3. To avoid the constant practice of normal formations.
4. To train the individual skirmisher.

I feel that what I have said contains nothing that is new, and the system I have described is probably that on which many have been working. In the second place, some will probably consider that I have made made too light of the obstacles which stand in the way of tactical training, that I have not allowed for the incessant administrative labours of commanding officers, the small number of men at their disposal, the difficulties in the way of getting suitable ground. Nevertheless, the repetition of sound principles is seldom altogether useless; and on the younger members of the profession of arms, who have hardly as yet begun to think about the question of infantry training in its broader aspect, but in whom we see our future commanding officers and generals, my remarks may not be entirely thrown away.

CHAPTER XIII

FOREIGN CRITICISM

THE quantity of foreign criticism on the war in South Africa leaves nothing to be desired. The quality may be inferred from the fact that one of the best known of German military historians declared that khaki was not taken into wear until after many defeats; that the English infantry attacked in solid line; that volleys were the only species of fire employed; and that the Boers never made use of the spade! The critics have probably been misled by the gutter press; for from no other source could the many false statements which form the basis of their criticism have been derived; and they have no doubt been greatly hampered by their want of experience of modern war. It is disappointing, at the same time, to find such deep students of European campaigns so utterly abroad when they approach another continent; and men who have been, and are perhaps still, soldiers, so careless of fact and so forgetful of fair play. The majority of the articles dealing with the campaign are not only remarkable for inaccuracy, but display an almost incredible disregard of the peculiar features of the theatre of war, of the nature of the fighting, of the disloyalty among the Dutch colonists, and of the advantages possessed by the Boers. Others, again, betray a large measure of pure spite, inspired, it would seem, by the uneasy consciousness that the command of the sea means more than the writers have hitherto been willing to admit, and by utter disgust at the revelation of the unity of the British Empire.

Jealousy and injustice, however, do not greatly concern us. It is much more to the purpose to recognise that the sweeping condemnation lavished, in so many quarters, on our strategy

and tactics is more likely to have been provoked by irritation than to be the result of patient investigation.

The art of war is diligently studied in Continental armies, and in certain respects with very good results. As regards the defence of the frontier on the outbreak of war, and the initial steps of a campaign in any part of their dominions, the great European Powers are probably better prepared than ourselves. The fortresses are garrisoned: the magazines full to the very doors; the transport effectively organised; the maps ready for issue; the positions where the troops are to concentrate selected; and the orders for their movements and distribution already drawn up. The circumstances, however, are widely different. The frontiers of the European Powers, except Russia, are, in the first place, of very limited extent compared with those of the British Empire; and, in the second, if they were not adequately protected, they might be attacked at any moment in overwhelming force. Nevertheless, when our critics reproach us for the neglect of precaution, it may be admitted that they are theoretically correct. Here, however, they are on ground where they may be trusted not to err. The broad principles which govern the defence of an exposed frontier are the same everywhere. Fortresses, magazines, transport, maps, positions, are always necessary; and it is doubtless true that, had Natal been garrisoned by 20,000 men, and Ladysmith adequately fortified, Sir Redvers Buller might have marched straight into the Free State, and the conquest of the Republics have been far less costly.

It is when the critics come to discuss the strategical movements of the campaign, as distinguished from the strategical preparation, that they betray their limitations, and it is impossible not to be struck by the narrow formalism, and often unpractical character, of their strategical and tactical conceptions. If they are to be taken as the exponents of foreign military thought, then the study of the art of war has indeed fallen on evil days. In almost every article we mark the same defects. First, an entire ignorance of our system of government, of the elementary principles of political economy, and of the responsibilities of a great Colonial Empire. Second, a

reckless treatment of evidence. Third, a positive disinclination to admit that the organisation, drill, training, and composition of Continental armies might possibly be bettered; and, lastly, the habit of testing strategical and tactical operations by a number of hard-and-fast rules.

The first of these we might pass by without further comment, were it not that ignorance of factors of such importance points either to superficial methods of study or to a want of grasp. Nor would the second be worth notice if it did not lead us to suspect that the theorists are not over-scrupulous as to the means by which they arrive at their conclusions. The third, to be dealt with later, is a fault more serious than the last—the habit of testing everything by the so-called rules of war. How often must the critics in question have told the story of the old Austrian generals and the young Napoleon! And yet, like all pure theorists, they are rapidly degenerating into formalists of exactly the same type as the unfortunate veterans whom the great breaker of rules so hardly treated. It is not to be wondered at. Both strategy and tactics must be studied practically as well as theoretically—on the field as well as at manœuvres or in the study; and unless a soldier has a practical acquaintance with war; unless he is familiar, from personal contact, with the conditions that govern both strategy and tactics: unless he understands that in war it is always the unexpected that happens; he is not likely, except his genius be Napoleonic, to be worth much as either critic or leader. More than this, the man who has never had to do with the conception and execution of strategical movements is pretty certain to overlook the difficulty of putting principles into practice, to underrate the part played by the unforeseen; and, in consequence, to be too apt to believe that rules and precedents are of far greater importance than common-sense, and that the methods sanctioned by previous practice are the only methods that a general should use.

War, however, is no exact science; it has no fixed code of rules. All that can be said is that there is one good working principle—the concentration of superior force at the decisive point—which, if applied, will generally bring about success;

and a good many others which it is risky, but not necessarily fatal, to infringe. But the theorists will have it that the rules of war are as inflexible as the Ten Commandments. 'Such and such a principle was violated,' they cry; 'therefore the strategy was unsound.' It may be remarked, however, that they never seem to consider whether any other strategy was possible. For example, the German military historian already referred to declares that when the Boers invested Ladysmith 'they hoped to force the English to send their main force to Natal. General Buller,' he continues, 'foolishly complied with their desire, and split up his army corps so that on no one of the three fields of operations could he appear with the necessary superiority.' Passing by the fact that the Boers wanted to occupy Natal, and not to attract the main English army thither, it will be observed that the critic makes no attempt to discuss the reason which induced Sir Redvers Buller to act as he did, nor does he suggest an alternative. It is quite enough for him that the General did not apply the first rule of strategy. Whether it was practicable to do so he never stays to consider; and yet the circumstances were such that the division of the army corps into three parts, on three different lines of operations, was absolutely unavoidable. Had Ladysmith and Kimberley been well-found fortresses of modern type, such as the German critic is accustomed to see on European frontiers, they might for the time being have been left to themselves, while the army corps marched *en masse* upon Bloemfontein. But both Ladysmith and Kimberley, as it seemed at the time, and as the writer himself admits, might have been stormed before the army corps could be concentrated; and had either one or the other fallen, it was within the bounds of probability that the whole of the Cape Dutch would have risen in rebellion. In order to prevent the Boers from pressing the sieges with vigour, as well as to keep the would-be rebels in suspense, Sir Redvers Buller had absolutely no alternative but to attempt to relieve both garrisons simultaneously.

Other instances, displaying even greater pedantry, might be cited; but it is sufficient to note that in every single case the

critic entirely fails to grasp the bearing of conditions which he has never before contemplated, and that he makes no allowance whatever for the difference between war in South Africa and war in Europe.

The truth is that the military writers of the Continent are so saturated with the campaign of 1870–71, and have confined their industry so closely to the conditions of one theatre of war —the tract of fertile, thickly populated, and highly civilised country which lies between Berlin and Paris—that they understand war under one aspect only. They are doubtless quite right to concentrate their attention on what is of vital importance to themselves. But we are not therefore bound to believe that they are good judges of warfare under conditions with which they are absolutely unfamiliar, nor that the rules which they deduce from events which occurred thirty years ago, on a theatre of war of the easiest and most favourable character, are of universal application. In fact, there is good reason to suspect that their intense devotion to one aspect of war and a single series of events is acting adversely on their own armies. As has been already said, in war it is always the unexpected that happens. There is no finality in either strategy or tactics. The theorist may believe that he has anticipated everything that can possibly occur; but history tells us that in almost every campaign some new factor—produced sometimes by accident, sometimes by the genius of an individual, sometimes by a national instinct—takes even the most experienced by surprise, and often completely reverses the accepted teaching of the time. So in the early battles of Napoleon the rigid masses of Austrians and Prussians broke up into bewildered fragments under the fire of the French skirmishers, and fell an easy prey to the columns in rear. In the Peninsula, on the other hand, those same skirmishers, met by the two-deep line and its broad front of musketry, recoiled helplessly on the columns whose advance they could no longer cover. In these instances the surprise was tactical; in others it has been strategical—in 1870, for example, the rising of the French people and the creation of the National Army, a proceeding which even Moltke considered absolutely contrary to rule; in

1866, Moltke's invasion on two distinct lines of operation, an innovation which still shocks the theorists; in 1877, Plevna; and in 1899, the Boer invasion of Natal.

Furthermore, in every campaign one side or the other will have to face conditions for which it is impossible to make provision. Defeat, as a rule, destroys the organisation of an army, scatters the transport, reduces one or more arms of the service to inefficiency, and puts out of gear the whole machinery of the staff. Here neither rule nor precedent will avail. Common-sense, the resourcefulness which is born of a varied experience, and the habit of dealing with questions of organisation to suit special circumstances, are alone to be relied on where a new army has to be constituted from the *disjecta membra* of an old one. When Lord Roberts landed at Cape Town on January 10, 1900, and decided to march on Bloemfontein, and so relieve both Kimberley and Ladysmith, the troops available for the enterprise were scattered in independent commands over a huge tract of country. There was no army organisation. There was very little transport. There was a deficiency of mounted men. The railway facilities were limited. There was no plan of campaign, and there was hardly any information regarding the physical features of the country to be invaded. In short, except the organisation of the communications, almost everything had to be dealt with *de novo*. Nevertheless, a month later an army 35,000 strong, including 10,000 mounted men, 116 guns, and transport sufficient to enable it to reach Bloemfontein, over 100 miles from the rendezvous, was concentrated between the Orange and the Modder Rivers. In those thirty days the soldiers whose good luck associated them with this achievement probably learnt more of war, and of the training best adapted to its successful conduct, than any theorist could teach them; and if the question were put to them 'Is it likely that men trained on a cut-and-dried system, whose reliance is on rule and precedent, and whose experience is even narrower than their reading, would have dealt so effectively with such extraordinary conditions?' not one would reply in the affirmative.

Nearly a century ago a great conqueror scoffed at the

'Sepoy General' who had landed in Portugal with a tiny army. Yet that Sepoy general, who had seen war under many aspects, who had all his service been organising, and improvising, and dealing with different races in different climates, and who, at the same time, was a vigilant student of European warfare, was the only general that neither Napoleon nor his marshals could overthrow. We may still be permitted to believe that the training of the British officer, involving, as it does, like that of Wellington, a knowledge of many men, of many climates, of many lands, and of many modes of fighting, does more to sharpen and quicken both thought and action than a knowledge of a single campaign and the practice of peace manœuvres under unvarying conditions.

The same reluctance to dive deep enough to find the truth and to make just allowances characterises the reflections on the tactics as on the strategy of the campaign. It is not to be denied that the Grand Tactics—that is to say, the management of the battles and the combination of the three arms—have been sometimes faulty. No generals, however, even of the school of Moltke, are infallible; and, in any case, failures in leadership are capable of so many interpretations that the question is too large for discussion here. But as regards minor tactics, such as outposts, reconnaissance, formation under fire, and methods of attack, the critics give far too little credit, not only to the peculiar conditions of South African war and the hunter's craft of the Boer marksman, but to the terribly demoralising effect of modern fire and the embarrassments created by smokeless powder. These last are the important features of the campaign, and it is with something more than surprise that we note a stubborn refusal to admit that the flat trajectory of the small-bore rifle, together with the invisibility of the man who uses it, has wrought a complete revolution in the art of fighting battles.

To have to confess that the organisation and training of the gigantic armies of the Continent are based on antiquated principles would be more than humiliating: it would be the signal for most costly and laborious reforms. Yet the phenomena of the South African conflict permit no doubt whatever that the

revolution is an accomplished fact. It is foolish, therefore, to say the least, to attempt to explain away these phenomena by questioning the courage of the English infantry, the intelligence of the cavalry, or by calmly assuming that our methods of attack were prehistoric, that our shooting was bad and our patrolling careless. Hasty generalisations, based on the very vaguest hearsay, and put forward by theorists who are notoriously prone to superficial analysis, are not likely to find acceptance.

Nor is it to be forgotten that the last tactical revolution was produced by exactly the same causes as the present. With the advent of the breech-loading rifles in the decade 1860–70 the rate of fire was more than doubled, the trajectory half as flat again, the accuracy at all but short ranges at least twice as great. Yet the superiority of the first breech-loaders to the weapon they superseded was assuredly not more marked than the superiority of the small-bore repeater, in rate of fire, in flatness of trajectory, and in accuracy, to the large-bore single-loader; and in 1860–70 the powder remained unchanged.

The nature of the revolution may be stated in a few words:

1. Infantry, attacking over open ground, must move in successive lines of skirmishers extended at wide intervals.

2. Cavalry, armed, trained, and equipped as the cavalry of the Continent, is as obsolete as the crusaders.

3. Reconnaissance, even more important than heretofore, is far more difficult.

To the first two of these propositions the theorists will take desperate exception. They have already proclaimed that the attack in line of skirmishers was simply adopted, both by ourselves and by the Boers, because neither we nor they knew better, and that Continental soldiers would have found no need to change their ordinary formations. The truth is, however, that our ordinary formations, previous to the war, were almost identically the same as those of other armies; but that our officers, thanks to the experience of the Tirah campaign, and to a very general instinct in favour of less rigid methods, recognised, before even a shot was fired, that what they had practised in peace was utterly unsuited to the Mauser-swept battlefield. On hardly a single occasion was the usage of the

manœuvre-ground adhered to. At least five paces between skirmishers, with supports and reserves in the same open order, was the rule from the very first; and the fact that the normal formations were so unanimously discarded speaks as highly for the resourcefulness of the British officer as the fact that the formations so unanimously substituted proved admirably adapted to the new conditions.

We shall not expect to see our example universally followed. At the autumn manœuvres of the Continental armies the old system of attack still holds the field; and thick firing lines, supported by closed bodies and offering ideal targets, advance stolidly without the slightest attempt to make use of the advantages of the ground, against the most formidable positions. It is still, too, an article of faith that four things only are necessary to success in the infantry attack—viz. discipline, energy, unity, and numbers. Such has been the opinion of Continental soldiers, since the close of the Franco-German war, and until their experience has been enlarged they are not likely to abandon it. Nevertheless, it contains two fatal flaws. First, that in these days of a flat trajectory and the magazine, mere weight of numbers, and the piling of battalion on battalion, will have the same effect as in the days of Napoleon. Second, that a dense line, formed of as many rifles as can find room, halting at intervals, will pour in so heavy and effective a fire as to render the return fire of the defenders comparatively innocuous.

It is not to be denied that numerical superiority is generally essential to success. But superiority, or at least equality of *moral*, is just as necessary; and when the preponderating masses suffer enormous losses; when they feel, as they will feel, that other and less costly means of achieving the same end might have been adopted, what will become of their *moral*? Good troops are not, indeed, to be stopped by the fear of heavy losses, even up to 30 or 40 per cent., if they understand that by no other means can victory be attained. But they are very easily stopped if they once come to believe that they are unintelligently handled; and the wise leader is he who yields, so far as discipline allows, to the instincts of those who follow

him. Numbers thrown in after the same reckless fashion as they were thrown in by Napoleon at Wagram, or by Grant at Spottsylvania, or by Steinmetz at Gravelotte, may win once; but even the best-disciplined army will not readily respond to a second call of the like nature.

Yet if troops are formed in dense lines from the very first they must be prepared to be lavish of their blood. The experience of the battlefield, putting aside mere common-sense, proves conclusively that against a well-covered enemy the troops advancing to the attack effect very little by their fire until they arrive within 500 or 600 yards of the position. With smokeless power they cannot even see the target; and, even if the defenders are to a certain extent disturbed by the storm of bullets flying overhead, they can hardly fail, if they do no more than keep their rifles horizontal, to play havoc with the mass opposed to them. It is argued, on the other hand, that a thin line of skirmishers must necessarily lose in the same ratio. But mathematical formulæ do not hold good upon the battlefield. The fact remains that a thin line of skirmishers suffers much less in proportion than a thick one; and, moreover, the moral effect is vastly different. Twenty-five skirmishers covering 250 yards of front will hardly notice the loss of five of their number; 250 men, shoulder to shoulder, will be sensibly affected by the loss of fifty.

Nor is there the slightest reason that discipline, energy, and unity should not be as conspicuous in the attack of skirmishers as in the attack of denser lines. The former method demands much more from the individual; and the individual, both officer and soldier, must therefore be trained and accustomed to independent action. But troops so trained will show a higher intelligence than others, and higher discipline, for it will not be merely a mechanical product; and intelligence, backed by discipline, is the surest guarantee of energetic and united action.

The objection most frequently urged against the attack by skirmishers who take advantage of all cover, avoid all unnecessary exposure, and gain ground to the front by stealth rather than by dash, is that the men become too careful of their lives. But is not this method of attack the reflection and the exten-

sion of good leading? The most brilliant offensive victories are not those which were mere 'bludgeon work,' and cost the most blood; but those which were won by surprise, by adroit manœuvre, by mystifying and misleading the enemy, by turning the ground to the best account, and of which the butcher's bill was small. How trifling was the loss, comparatively speaking, in many of the earlier and more decisive battles of Napoleon; how few English soldiers fell at the passage of the Douro, at Salamanca, at Vittoria, on the Bidassoa, and in the astonishing fight on the Nivelle; how few Germans at Sedan; and yet the generalship was of the highest order.

It may be said, however, that it is one thing for a general to spare his men, and another for the men to spare themselves; and undoubtedly the new system demands the very strictest discipline, high training, and resolute leaders. But if the new system is dangerous the old is impossible, except at a cost of life which no army and no nation can afford.

If the truth be told, the tactics of certain foreign armies, of which the chief characteristic is that they rely on the momentum of the mass rather than the skill of the individual, are as degenerate and out of date as the Prussian tactics in 1806, and from the same cause. A long peace is generally fatal to military efficiency. Too little experience of war and too much experience of field-days have always the same results—rigid and unvarying formations, attacks ruled by regulations instead of common-sense, and the uniformity of the drill-ground in every phase of the soldier's training. Uniformity is simple; it is easily taught, and it is eminently picturesque; it simplifies the task of inspecting officers; it is agreeable to the centralising tendencies of human nature; and when it appears in the guise of well-ordered lines, advancing with mechanical precision, it has a specious appearance of power and discipline, especially when compared with the irregular movements of a swarm of skirmishers. Furthermore, it is far less difficult to train men to work in mass than independently. Thus order, steadiness, and uniformity become a fetish; officers and men are drilled, not trained; and all individuality, however it may be encouraged by regulations, is quietly repressed in practice.

But if a state of profound peace has robbed the Continental infantry of elasticity, it has been even more mischievous for the sister arm. Even our own cavalry, when it took the field in 1899, was more or less paralysed by the burden of effete traditions. Despite the lessons of the American and the Russo-Turkish wars, it had been trained, so far as battle was concerned, to shock-tactics, and to little else. It was not equipped for great mobility; of fighting on foot it knew but little; and when confronted by the Boer riflemen the inferiority of the carbine placed it at a great disadvantage.

Yet it has long been clear that the opportunities for shock-tactics are very rare, and that for once cavalry has the chance of charging it is twenty times compelled to dismount and fire. Moreover, it is quite open to question whether the firearm, on all occasions except in the pursuit of an absolutely demoralised enemy, is not more deadly than lance or sabre; and whether, in this particular phase of battle, a cavalry which manœuvres like clockwork and charges in exactly dressed lines is a whit more formidable than any scratch pack of good horsemen whose hearts are in the right place. Be this as it may, the South African war affords much additional proof that cavalry must be thoroughly trained, properly equipped for dismounted action, and made far more mobile. The extraordinary results, strategical as well as tactical, that may be produced by mobility have been conclusively demonstrated; and it is clear as noonday that a mounted force as mobile as the Boers, and equal—as were Sheridan's troopers—to any emergency of attack or defence, will be a most effective weapon, even on a European theatre of war, in the hands of the strategist who grasps its possibilities.

The majority of our critics, however, are very far from taking to heart this obvious lesson; nor do they seem to have realised that the small-bore and smokeless powder have destroyed the last vestiges of the traditional *rôle* of cavalry. Otherwise they would have been less ready to condemn the conduct of our horsemen in South Africa, nor would they have attributed many apparent failures, due in reality to defects which every European cavalry possesses, to a want of enterprise and daring. It may

safely be said that no cavalry could have done better than our own regulars; not even on reconnaissance, for, under the new conditions, cavalry of the existing type is of very little value except to keep touch with the enemy's scouts. As to bringing in information of the extent of the enemy's position, of the numbers that hold it, guns, entrenchments, and the like, it is more powerless than ever. Than ever, because cavalry against a skilful enemy has never been a fully effective means of finding out what the general most wants to know; and in this respect the experiences of the Franco-German campaign are most misleading. In fact, it is hardly too much to say that, owing to these experiences, reconnaissance has become a lost art. Thanks to the utter supineness of the French, the German squadrons, whenever they were boldly handled, discovered a great deal; but to think that against a vigilant and astute enemy, armed with a magazine rifle, it could have done the same is to imagine a vain thing. The reconnaissance of a position is a business of which the Staff must arrange the details and provide the means; it is certainly not the work of the cavalry alone. Even in the era of the flint-lock musket it was not *on* the cavalry patrols that good generals relied for the detailed information they required before committing their troops to battle. To Napoleon and Wellington the cavalry were merely one of many sources of intelligence. Personal observation, often extending over several days, was a far surer source, especially when supplemented by the reports of picked Staff officers and well-paid spies.

But, even if we admit that the critics have some grounds, though not those on which they take their stand, for questioning the efficiency of our cavalry, their sneers at the spirit and endurance of our infantry are absolutely unjustified. It would have no doubt been exceedingly gratifying to those who have to sing the virtues of the conscript had the Anglo-Saxon system of voluntary service proved a broken reed; and the depth of their disappointment is to be measured by the malevolence of their abuse. A great deal has been made of the comparatively slight loss in several of the more important engagements—notably in those which ended in defeat; and it has been very generally

implied that our reverses were in great part due to a want of staying power in the men. The arguments brought forward would be peculiar were they not of a piece with those employed elsewhere. In the first place, comparisons are made with the losses suffered by Continental troops in various battles, with the view of establishing the conclusion that our infantry would not face more than a very small percentage of loss. For example, a German writer gives the following table:

An Austrian regiment in 1866 lost 46 per cent.

Several French regiments at Woerth, in 1870, lost 90 per cent.

Several Russian regiments in 1877 lost between 50 and 75 per cent.

Several Prussian regiments at Mars-la-Tour, in 1870, lost between 37 and 45 per cent.

On the other hand, he declares that our average loss on any one occasion never exceeded 10 per cent.

But mark the utter worthlessness of his statistics! The large majority of the regiments alluded to owed their heavy losses to the fact that they were badly beaten, and either retreated under fire—the most costly operation in war—or surrendered. Surely this is no proof of superior endurance or *moral*. If he thinks it is, what will he say of the following?

A force 4,000 strong held Spion Kop, a position on which there was not room for more than 500, until it received orders to retreat, although the loss was 38 per cent.

On February 23, 1900, the Irish Brigade lost over 50 per cent.; and, although it carried only one line of trenches, it remained all night, and the whole of the next day, within a few hundred yards of the second line, and beat back a hot counter-attack.

At Magersfontein the Black Watch, although it lost 75 per cent. in officers and over 35 per cent, in men, held on, under a heavy and continuous fire at short range, from four in the morning till one in the afternoon.

And there is much more to be said. Whatever might be the percentage of casualties our battalions suffered, they never lost their *moral*. In the fighting on the Tugela those that lost

most severely one day were foremost in the fight the next; and although each day success seemed further off, and the ranks grew thinner, yet the only effect on the rank and file was to increase their resolution. Let the critics of our soldiers ponder these facts, let them recall the fine marching and patient endurance of the half-starved regiments, and if they still see no cause to doubt the superiority of the conscript, they know little of war.

But a more serious charge than this statistical juggling has been brought against the men. At a lecture in Vienna, attended by the *élite* of the Austro-Hungarian Staff, it was stated that there were times when the troops could not be got to advance after a loss of only 3 to 9 per cent., and that at Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso they took to flight. Needless to say, no evidence was produced; and we can only presume that the lecturer was indebted for his information to the columns of the anti-British press. Had he known that the troops at Colenso retired by order of the General-in-chief, and retired with the utmost unwillingness; had he known that at Stormberg they were suddenly assailed by a heavy flank fire at short range; that, instead of running in panic, they advanced upon the enemy, and only retired when they found that he was posted on the crest of an inaccessible cliff; had he known that at Magersfontein the Highland Brigade held on, in a perfectly hopeless position, in the midsummer blaze of a South African sun and without water, for more than nine long hours; had he known that throughout the campaign the great difficulty was not to get the men to advance, but to prevent them advancing prematurely—he would probably have realised that the failures of an indomitable soldiery were due to mistakes in leading and to the peculiar conditions of modern battle.

What foreign soldiers cannot, or perhaps will not, see is that the war in South Africa, like the war in the Peninsula, and the Civil War in America, is a triumph for the principle of voluntary service. The *moral* of conscript armies has always been their weakest point; and it is the hope that the *moral* of the volunteer is no longer of a higher type that accounts for

unwarrantable inferences and the unscrupulous manipulation of flimsy evidence. For ourselves, we are content to know that the manhood of the race shows no signs of deterioration. If an army composed, not of regulars alone, but in great part of men with little or no special training, has proved capable, in circumstances of peculiar difficulty, of conquering a territory as large as Central Europe, bravely and cunningly defended, we need not yet be ashamed to speak with our enemies in the gate.

Nevertheless, it is just as well that the misrepresentations of our critics should be exposed. Reform is the natural outcome of revolution; and revolution in tactics must involve many new departures, both in training and organisation. Expert advisers will naturally be the chief guides in determining their scope and character; but it is to be remembered that this is a question of something more than professional interest. The old order has given place to the new. The old Royal Army, recruited exclusively in the British Isles and India, has passed away. It is an Imperial Army with which our legislators will have to deal—an army of which the Colonial forces will form an integral part; in which hundreds of regiments of unfamiliar title—the 'Young Guard' of Canada, Australia and New Zealand—will stand side by side with those whose names are household words. With the establishment, the efficiency, and the maintenance of the new army public opinion is intimately concerned. It is of importance, therefore, that the public should not be misled into believing that the revolution wrought by the new weapon is purely mythical, that voluntary service has broken down, and that salvation is only to be found in an imitation of the tactics and organisation of armies that have no experience of modern war.

It is on this account that Graf Sternberg's book is chiefly welcome. It is something more than a lively record of military adventure. The author is an experienced soldier, who saw a great deal of South Africa, and quite enough of the campaign to give his opinions weight. His Dugald Dalgetty-like indifference as to which side he fought for, so long as he did fight, is a strong proof of his impartiality; and the delightful

simplicity of his narrative makes it impossible to doubt its truthfulness. His ideas of English political morality may be passed by with a smile; but his comments on both tactics and organisation are worth attention; while his admiration of the British soldier, together with his ample recognition of the abnormal difficulties of the theatre of war, supply a wholesome corrective to the criticisms dealt with in the preceding pages.

CHAPTER XIV

THE BRITISH ARMY

THE land forces of the Empire in the year 1899, though only the second line of defence, were by no means insignificant. The names of a round million of officers and men figured on the muster rolls; while behind them were many thousands who had already passed through the ranks, and as many more who were eager to bear arms in case of war. Compared with the 50,000 fighting men of the Boer Republics, even if raised to 80,000 or 100,000 by reinforcements of their Cape kinsfolk and foreign sympathisers, the armed strength of Great Britain was apparently overwhelming. But the relative value of armies is not to be arrived at by merely counting heads. Force which cannot be concentrated at the point of conflict is hardly worth taking into account. If the elements of such force lack homogeneity; if they are so loosely organised that their mobilisation is slow and their transfer to the scene of action a matter of months; or if, by reason of their geographical distribution, or their political environment, they can only be employed for purposes of local defence, it is manifest that an imposing total is very far from a guarantee of the swift action and heavy blows which war so imperatively demands.

Each of these defects, in an accentuated form, was present in the military constitution of the British Empire. Of the million soldiers 450,000 were regulars, but of these 150,000, by reason of their colour, were held to be debarred from service in South Africa. The remainder were militia or volunteers, and, as no pains had been taken to form even the roughest estimate, the number they would contribute to a distant expedition was absolutely uncertain. Geographical distribution presented an even greater obstacle to concentration. It was more than ever

true, at the end of the nineteenth century, that the morning drum-beat of Great Britain goes round the world The regiments of the regular army had quarters in every continent except Australasia. They held the islands of the sea; their bayonets glittered on the furthest frontiers of civilisation; and on the coasts of the seven seas their sentries looked down on the still waters of many harbours. An even larger area swallowed up the half-million of citizen soldiers. Had it been necessary, or practicable, to assemble them at a single rendezvous, the ships for their conveyance would have traversed every trade route on blue water. In the smallest and most remote dependencies of the Crown the principle of voluntary service under arms had taken root. Every coaling station—and coaling stations were numerous—provided a local force for its own defence. Every island which flew the Union Jack had its levies of artillery and infantry; and each one of the larger colonies was defended by its own army of militia and volunteers.

Yet between these several contingents, though animated by a common patriotism, the links were light in the extreme. The troops used the same drill, learned the same tactics. The units of the three arms, the regiment, the battery, and the battalion, were generally identical. The officers bore the same titles. The men carried the same equipment. In all else, in the methods of maintaining discipline, in the rate of payment, in the terms of service, in the systems of command, of transport, and of supply, the differences were marked. None, moreover, of the colonial contingents were prepared for aggressive war, or to form part of an army of invasion. It is manifest, then, that such aid as the British Government might reasonably count upon in case the Empire was threatened would be neither immediately forthcoming, nor, when it reached the scene of action of a very substantial character. It is a military truism that allied armies, even though numerically superior, are always at a disadvantage when pitted against a single adversary whose troops are of one nation. The same disadvantage, though in a less degree, was bound to exist in any assemblage of Imperial forces in 1899. Collected from all parts of the globe, differing in their modes of life, their social prejudices, their traditions,

their political environment, the troops when they first came together were far from forming a solid and well-tempered mass. The Colonials were strangers both to the regulars and to each other; the regulars, in certain respects, had little in common with the Colonials. Their standards of discipline, their codes of etiquette, their ideas of war, their views on the exercise of authority and of the relation between officers and men, were to a large extent divergent; and while the one laughed at the punctilious subordination of the professional, the other suspected the endurance of the volunteer.

The materials, then, that went to the making of the Imperial army were heterogeneous. The troops did not know each other except by hearsay; and without mutual knowledge mutual trust is impossible. Moreover, though the strong flame of kinship and of a common patriotism, to say nothing of the discovery of a common manfulness, might be trusted to obliterate all differences, the process must needs be long; and the foreigner, though egregiously mistaken in considering the unity of the Empire to be a meaningless phrase, was perfectly justified in looking upon the Imperial army as a military myth. It was surely incomprehensible, to anyone aware of the rapidity with which war between civilised nations now develops, of the few days that elapse between the declaration and the first blow, that no effort should have been made so to organise the army that it could be mobilised and assembled in the shortest time possible, that the component parts should not have been so trained and administered that they would fit at once into their places, and that no common system of command, of staff duties, and of orders should have done away with all chance of unnecessary friction. Little was needed beyond a mutual understanding between the home and colonial authorities as to the extent of the assistance to be provided. Once it was agreed that time was of the utmost importance, that the administration of the various contingents should be assimilated, and that officers should everywhere work on the same lines, especially as regards staff duties, everything, except the publication of a few rules and principles, might have been left without the smallest misgiving to the Colonies themselves.

The reason that the Imperial army was unorganised in 1899 was not because organisation was difficult, or because the Colonies were reluctant to commit themselves, but because the question of Imperial defence had never been approached from the standpoint of Imperial strategy.

The units, therefore, which eventually formed the army of South Africa, composed of regulars, of militia, and of volunteers, in all stages of training and cohesion, hailing from many different States and thrown promiscuously on a far-off coast, there to take form and substance as an invading force, suffered from the inadequate organisation which is the inevitable outcome of the neglect of strategy. But if they could hardly be classed, in the aggregate, as a fine army, according to modern ideas, yet there was no reason whatever, if time were given, why they should not become one. Certain virtues were common to the mass. Not a man amongst them was either a conscript or commandeered. The spirit of *noblesse oblige*, the pride of freedom and independence, inspired the rank and file. They were in South Africa because they were eager to fight the Queen's enemies, not because they had drawn a number; and the Anglo-Saxon who becomes a soldier of his own free will, even granting that he is sometimes attracted by high pay, does far better service than when he acts under compulsion.

The War of Secession affords the most ample evidence of the truth of the old proverb that one volunteer is worth three pressed men. At the outset the regular regiments were undoubtedly the staunchest troops in either camp. As the war went on, and the ranks thinned under the fearful slaughter of many battles, both Unionists and Confederates were compelled to adopt the ballot, but the conscript soldiers, as well as those who had sold themselves for enormous bounties, fell short in every single respect of the volunteers; they were more liable to panic, less forward in attack, more prone to insubordination, less stubborn in defence, and it was a common opinion in the North that they were even inferior to the negroes. The soldiers of Great Britain, moreover, whether regular or volunteer, British or Colonial, were heirs to proud traditions. The glories of their predecessors, of the regiments of

Marlborough and of Wellington, of Raglan and of Clyde, fell upon them like the prophet's mantle. The memories of daring enterprises and great conquests achieved by stern endurance not less than by superior skill, had left an abiding impression upon the national character. The men of Badajos and Albuera did far more than give the death-blow to the ambition of Napoleon; they set an imperishable example of unyielding fortitude, an example which was to influence the coming generations not only of their own islands, but of far distant continents, of Canada, of Australasia, and of South Africa. The determination to prove themselves worthy of their sires, to uphold the honour of their race, burned, often unconsciously, in every breast; and those who were soldiers only for the war were not less resolved to conquer, not less ready to accept the sacrifices by which victory is appeased, than those who were in the ranks of some historic regiment. The moral discipline, then, of the Imperial army could hardly have been bettered; and, in addition to their common attributes, each of the several contingents was possessed of characteristics which were peculiarly its own. To the patriotism of the regulars not the least strenuous of their foes has offered voluntary tribute.

Success in war is almost wholly in the hands of the officers. There have been soldiers' battles, in which the valour of the men has redeemed the blunders of the general, but, as has been truly observed, there has never been a soldiers' campaign. Even the most enthusiastic patriots must be led; and an army of stags, says the adage, commanded by a lion, is better than an army of lions commanded by a stag. The war with the Boer Republics presents this remarkable feature, that for the first time in their history the British people were inclined to be dissatisfied with the regular officer. And yet before Mr. Kruger delivered his ultimatum his character stood high. Take the opinion of an unprejudiced observer, himself a soldier of no mean ability, and an historian of uncompromising accuracy.

'On the Canadian frontiers in 1787 the important people were the army officers. They were imperious, able, resolute men, well drilled, and with a high standard of honour. They upheld with jealous pride the reputation of an army which in

that century proved again and again that on stricken fields no soldiery of Continental Europe could stand against it. They wore a uniform which for the last two hundred years has been better known than any other wherever the pioneers of civilisation tread the world's waste places, or fight their way to the overlordship of barbarous empires; a uniform known to the southern and the northern hemispheres, the eastern and the western continents, and all the islands of the sea. Subalterns wearing this uniform have fronted dangers and responsibilities such as in most other services only grey-headed generals are called upon to face; and at the head of handfuls of troops have won for the British Crown realms as large, and often as populous, as European kingdoms. The scarlet-clad officers who serve the monarchy of Great Britain have conquered many a barbarous people in all the ends of the earth, and hold for their Sovereign the lands of Moslem and Hindoo, of Tartar and Arab and Pathan, of Malay, Negro and Polynesian. In many a war they have overcome every European rival against whom they have been pitted. Again and again they have marched to victory against Frenchman and Spaniard through the sweltering heat of the tropics; and now, from the stupendous mountain masses of mid Asia, they look northward through the wintry air, ready to bar the advance of the legions of the Czar. Hitherto they have never gone back save once; they have failed only when they sought to stop the westward march of a mighty nation, a nation kin to theirs, a nation of their own tongue and law, and mainly of their own blood.'[1]

Whether those who commanded the Queen's troops in 1899 were as well abreast of their duties as their predecessors history will decide. It is certain, in any case, that the British officer, military or naval, is what Britain makes him. His natural qualities, be they virtues or defects, are those of his race, and it is the country, not himself, which is primarily responsible for the development of the one and the correction of the other. The profession of arms is no exception to the rule that efficiency and success depend more on systematic training than on

[1] *The Winning of the West.* By Theodore Roosevelt [now President of the United States]. Vol. iii., pp. 51–52. New York and London, 1894.

inherent aptitude; and the education of the officer is necessarily, from the nature of his position, almost entirely in the hands of the State.

Education, however, to be of any practical value, must be expended on material that is capable of absorbing it. Was this the case in the regular army of Great Britain? Was the material with which those responsible for the efficiency of the land forces had to deal sufficiently receptive? It is universally admitted that the builders and the administrators of the Empire beyond the seas have been, and still are, at least the equals, both in intellect and in character, of those who control its destinies at home; and to their long roll of honour no class has contributed more largely than the officers of the British army. South Africa, not less than India or than Egypt, affords a striking proof of their capacity for government. Who, of those who directed the policy of that turbulent frontier displayed the clearer insight and the shrewder judgment? Who were the most successful in stilling racial strife, in conciliating the disaffected, in curbing the restiveness and in promoting the prosperity of a young community? Who, in a word, served the Empire best? Not those who carried off the prizes at Winchester or Eton, or had taken high honours at the Universities; not the great statesmen of Westminster, or the shining lights of literature, but those who had been bred in camps, who had lived their lives in arms, and whose knowledge of mankind was greater than their erudition.

Lords Glenelg and Grey, the disciples of Bright and Cobden, were politicians of long experience. Bulwer Lytton and Froude were ranked among the kings of thought. Carnarvon was the trusted colleague of Lord Beaconsfield. Kimberley and Derby were not the least able leaders of the Liberals; and Gladstone, Oxford's favourite son, was asserted by a majority of his countrymen to be politically infallible. Yet if these men were to be judged by their conduct of South African affairs, they would be set down as absolutely incapable of dealing with the problems of Empire. And although it would be unfair to base a verdict on what, after all, was but an isolated and an unfamiliar phase of Imperial politics, it must still be

admitted that they compare most unfavourably in their management of both Boers and natives with the military administrators who represented them at Cape Town. If the people of South Africa did not become utterly disgusted with the vagaries and vacillations of their far-off rulers; if they came to realise that not all Englishmen of high station were devoid of foresight, of firmness, and of consistency; that all did not consider them as mere pawns upon the political chessboard—it was due to the men of the Peninsula, to Dundas and Craig, to Cradock and David Baird, to D'Urban and Napier, to Harry Smith, and in later generations to George Grey and Henry Loch.

The sphere of the Colonial governors was certainly narrower than that of the statesmen of Westminster, and their responsibilities smaller. Yet the administration of a vast territory, vexed as much by the clash of barbarism and civilisation as by racial feuds and conflicting policies, was an excellent test of practical ability, and that the soldiers, without exception, proved sterling metal, goes far to show that the society which produced them was not intellectually inferior, for all purposes of government, to that which recruited the British Cabinet. It may even be suspected, when the gross blunders perpetrated in South Africa by British Ministries are taken into consideration, that the training which goes to make men of action is of a harder and more masculine character than that which moulds the men of the office and the pen. The latter, it would seem, tends to form intellects which are critical rather than constructive, persuasive rather than commanding, and which, when they become involved in the storm and stress of political life, instead of building solidly for the future are content with patchwork. It is not without significance that Sir Bartle Frere and Lord Milner, the greatest of the civilian proconsuls, had served in India and in Egypt a probation analogous in many respects to that of their military predecessors.

That such probation should bear good fruit is in itself strong evidence of natural ability, as much in the soldier as in the civilian. But it is perhaps more to the point to note that the military administrators in the South African Colonies,

saving only Sir George Grey, were not specially selected for the post they so worthily filled. As a rule, they owed their appointment rather to their seniority in the Army List and their personal predilections than to acknowledged merit. Their seniority, it is true, was the reward of their own ability and enterprise. But many of their contemporaries had made equally good use of that admirable system of brevet rank which offers so many opportunities to those officers who are resolute to seize them. The Governors of the Cape were not even the best men of their grade. They were capable generals, but none, with the exception perhaps of Sir Harry Smith, had the smallest claim to be placed in the first class. They were good representatives of their profession, above the general average in capacity, but distinguished by no such superiority over their fellows as that which is generally conceded to the members of a British Ministry.

It is an opinion, however, very commonly held, notwithstanding that every stone in the fabric of the Empire cries out against it, that the best brains in the country gravitate more readily to the learned professions or to commerce than to the army. But an investigation of the reasons which prevail with young men in their choice of a military career hardly bears it out. The prospect of commanding a thousand, or even a hundred, fighting men, has far more attraction to a large number of young Englishmen than even a seat in the Cabinet or a partnership in Lombard Street. Boys become soldiers not because, as the old taunt puts it, they are 'the fools of the family' but because the instincts of leadership are strong within them. A life of action, seasoned with sport, with glory, and with adventure, appeals to them with far greater force than the promise of a less stirring existence and financial affluence, and it by no means follows that the intellectual endowment of men who, like George Washington, have 'a strong bent towards arms' is not of the highest order. Strength of character, sound judgment, and constructive ability are the distinguishing marks of eminent capacity; and it is not to be gainsaid that they have been found in the past as frequently among soldiers as elsewhere.

From its earliest days the efficiency and the success of the standing army of Great Britain have been largely derived from the high qualifications of many of its officers. Practically every important campaign has produced at least one great leader, and many good ones; and almost all of them have been well educated. The training of some, such as Cromwell, Marlborough, and Clive, has been altogether practical; their wits sharpened and their intellect strengthened, as was also the case with Nelson and St. Vincent, by long and varied experience. These, however, are the exceptions, and it is not to be overlooked that their natural genius for war was of the highest order. The majority, including Wolfe and Wellington, have been deep students of the military art, relying not merely on the knowledge derived from their own personal practice and conclusions, but assimilating the practice and conclusions of the great captains. The era of Napoleon, when war first became a science, was peculiarly prolific, so far as the British army was concerned, in characters so trained. Wellington's lieutenants in the Peninsula and his colleagues in India were as earnest and as industrious as himself, and the tradition of hard work they handed down, though at times obscured, was never completely lost to sight. At no time was the importance of study more generally accepted as a guiding principle than at the end of the nineteenth century. The brilliant successes of Moltke and his Prussians, due almost entirely to a thorough knowledge of war and its practical application, had rekindled the torch. Competitive examination both for first commissions and the staff gave an impulse to intellectual activity; while the influence and example of Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley, the best read soldier of his time, who from 1882 onwards was the moving spirit in the path of progress, had a marked effect upon the younger generation. Apathy became unfashionable, hard work the rule; study was no longer considered useless; and the professional acquirements of the officers reached a far higher standard than they had attained since Waterloo.

The standard, however, might easily have been higher still. Zeal was never lacking in the army. The troops had always been well disciplined and well drilled. The internal economy

of the different units was everywhere admirable. The health and comfort of the men were most carefully looked to; and the rivalry between regiments, and even between squadrons and companies, though confined to the exercises of the parade-ground, to soldierly bearing, and to good conduct, was a token not only of a strong *esprit de corps*, but of a strong sense of duty and professional pride among the regimental officers. They were supported, it is true, by an excellent body of non-commissioned officers; but although these men, who have been rightly styled the backbone of the army, furnished an invaluable link between the private soldiers and the higher grades, their powers were strictly limited; they were merely assistants to their superiors; and it was impossible, under the system of regimental administration, that they could become their substitutes. Thus between the company officer and the rank and file no obstruction whatever existed, and in no army were their personal relations, especially on foreign service, closer, or more constant.

No incident is more familiar in our military history than the stubborn resistance of the British line at Waterloo. Through the long hours of the midsummer day, silent and immovable the squares and squadrons stood in the trampled corn, harassed by an almost incessant fire of cannon and of musketry, to which they were forbidden to make reply. Not a moment but heard some cry of agony; not a moment but some comrade fell headlong in the furrows. Yet as the bullets of the skirmishers hailed around them, and the great round shot tore through the tight packed ranks, the word was passed quietly, 'Close in on the centre, men'; and as the sun neared his setting, the regiments, still shoulder to shoulder, stood fast upon the ground they had held at noon. The spectacle is characteristic. In good fortune and in ill it is rare indeed that a British regiment does not hold together; and this indestructible cohesion, best of all the qualities that an armed body can possess, is based not merely on hereditary resolution, but on mutual confidence and mutual respect. The man in the ranks has implicit faith in his officer, the officer an almost unbounded belief in the valour and discipline of his men; and

it is quite safe to say that men who have been less intimately associated, whose interests were not so closely intertwined, and who were not so certain of each other's worth, would never have closed in, step by step, and hour by hour, on the bloody ridge of Waterloo. The thought that defeat is even remotely possible is the last that occurs to the mind of the British soldier; and the spirit that looks forward to victory as not less certain than the sunrise is in great part due to the professional zeal of the British officer.

For the purposes of war, however, it is not sufficient that the zeal of the officers should be confined to the exact performance of their duties in camp or barracks. Monotony and routine, and of both there must needs be much in the soldier's existence, are certain, if unrelieved, to deaden ambition and to contract the intellect; and it is not to be denied that there were officers in the army of 1899 who had no thought beyond the mechanical performance of trivial duties. Why this should have been the case is easily explained. There were many whose minds refused to be circumscribed by the barrack wall. Determined to learn something more of the business of fighting than was taught upon the parade-ground, they found means, like Wolfe and Wellington, to instruct themselves. Yet from those responsible for their training, at all events in Great Britain and her Colonies, they received but little aid. The educational machinery of the home army was far below that of any other profession. Instruction, in anything beyond drill, discipline, and interior economy, was not only limited in amount but carried on under the greatest difficulties. The knowledge of ground, which is of such paramount importance to the fighting man, and which we have seen is almost instinctive in the Boer and the Afridi, was altogether denied to the soldier trained solely in the British Isles. Its place was supposed to be supplied by theoretical study. To such study the cadet colleges were devoted; and no further knowledge than an acquaintance with the routine of barracks was demanded from those who sought commissions from the Militia. When the young officer, lacking the very smallest practical acquaintance with ground, with skirmishing, with

scouting, joined his regiment, he found that his opportunities of practice, unless he happened to be quartered in a peculiarly favoured station, were exceedingly few. Either there was no space available for field-training, or the men, employed on various duties which had nothing whatever to do with their training for war, were not forthcoming. At the depots it was even worse than with the regiments. The supervision of a few recruits, practising the most elementary exercises for a few hours daily, absorbed but little time, aroused less interest, and offered no opportunities for useful practice. In his two years of depot service, the officer, unless he chose to study in his own quarters, learnt nothing and forgot much. Time hung heavy on his hands, and it was often wasted.

The result may be readily surmised. Theory, if it is to leave an impression on the mind, must go hand in hand with practice, and a system of instruction which overlooks this consideration is not only useless, but revolting to common-sense. Not a few, therefore, of the regimental officers, over-dosed with theory, and with theory forced upon them, it may be added, in the least attractive form, turned impatiently from the study of dull treatises, and sought an outlet for their energies in other directions. Nor was the path of knowledge made easy for the more active-minded. Generals and commanding officers were not held responsible for the intellectual advancement of their subordinates, but merely for their knowledge of the official text-books and regulations. If an officer was inclined to read, there was no one to whom he could apply for advice as to what to read; his education in the higher branches of military science was no one's business but his own. He was even told that a knowledge of strategy—and strategy is at least one-half, and the more important half, of the art of war—was required from staff officers alone; and, in consonance with this extraordinary doctrine, military history was taught officially nowhere but at the Staff College. Yet military history, as the record of divers experiences, covering all conditions of country, of climate, and of armament—as the storehouse of the accumulated knowledge of soldiers of all ages—as the revelation of the practice and the principles of the great captains—as the platform from which

war in its every aspect, from the manœuvres of vast armies to the forays of the guerilla, may be surveyed—is the one and only means, in default of long service in the field, of forming a military instinct, and of gaining a clear insight into the innumerable problems connected with the organisation and the command of an armed force.

At a few large stations voluntary societies provided courses of lectures during the winter; and these no doubt did much towards awakening a general interest in the larger questions connected with the conduct of campaigns. But the Government made no response whatever to this significant symptom of a growing demand for higher and more systematic training. Nay more, it gradually and deliberately reduced the instructional apparatus. Military education had few friends outside the army, and no authoritative voice was raised, either in Parliament or in the Press, when the economists, pursuing a reckless path up the line of least resistance, proceeded to deprive the British officer of such facilities for acquiring professional knowledge as he already enjoyed. The large garrison libraries which had been established in the early years of the century, fitted with the best professional literature, and maintained at the public expense, were ruined by the withdrawal of the annual grant. If officers wished to read, they had to provide the books themselves.[1] The garrison classes, conducted by specially appointed instructors, were practically abolished. Their teaching had been confined to revising a knowledge of subjects with which the students were already acquainted, and this undoubtedly was a waste of energy. But, instead of making them the vehicle of further education, their comparative uselessness, under existing conditions, was alone considered; and because they cost money, because they took officers away from the regiments, already undermanned, they went by the board. If officers desired further education, they had to pay for it out of their own pockets. But more serious still was the degradation of the Department of Education. For some years it was

[1] The excellent periodicals of the legal and medical professions, as well as those dealing with engineering, building, architecture, &c., had no counterpart in the military world.

adequate in form. At its head was a general officer, specially selected, presumably, on account of his extensive acquaintance with the army, and the science of education as a whole, and of the educational systems of foreign armies in particular. In all educational matters he was the adviser of the Commander-in-Chief and of the Secretary of State for War. He was responsible for the efficiency of the Military Colleges, for the selection of officers employed upon instructional duties, and for all examinations. Unfortunately he had to be paid, and a saving was effected by throwing his duties on to the shoulders of the Military Secretary, an officer already overworked, who might or might not have the necessary qualifications.

The chances of practice, too, both at home and in many colonial stations, were fewer than those of other professions; and while it is easy to lay overmuch stress on the necessity of study, it is impossible to overrate the importance of practice. According to Mahan, the naval victories of England in the Great War were due in great part to the fact that the fleets of France, continually in port, were always at a disadvantage when they met their storm-tried enemies on the high seas. In 1899 the case of the British regimental officer serving at home was somewhat similar to that of the commanders and the crews of Napoleon's battleships. His training, to pursue the analogy, was in still water; his knowledge of navigation and seamanship was often purely hearsay, and he was never permitted to face wind and waves. 'Give us men to command and ground where we may train ourselves and them!' Such was the cry throughout the army from 1870 onwards; and though when Lord Wolseley became Commander-in-Chief the annual expenditure on practical training was at once increased, the ranks of the regiments were still attenuated; duties about barracks had still the first claim upon the men, and field-exercises, when compared with those of Continental armies, were limited both in scope and in duration. In the year 1898 manœuvres in which two army corps took part were tried for the first time for six-and-twenty years, and it can hardly be said that either the arrangements or the leading were so perfect as to show that the generals and staff were in no need of instruc-

tion. On the contrary, the generals themselves were the first to declare how many lessons they had learned. But beyond this spasmodic effort nothing whatever was done to give the senior officers, the leaders of prospective armies and army corps, experience in handling large bodies of troops over wide stretches of country, or to encourage them to consider strategy as well as tactics. Yet manœuvres on such a scale are absolutely essential to the well-being of an army. They not only give practice to the generals and the staff, affording them opportunities for working out strategical and tactical problems under conditions in some degree analogous to those of actual war, for discussing their solutions, and for initiating and testing the modifications in established methods made necessary by improved armaments or progressive theory, but they afford excellent opportunities for determining their capacity for command. If the senior officers are never tested in time of peace, it is always possible that a man may be appointed to an important command in the field who has lost his nerve, whose brain is rusty, whose knowledge is out of date, who is unacquainted with the tactics of the latest text-books, or whose claims to high preferment rest upon a brilliant reputation, won, perhaps, in a less responsible rank, and on an easier field. 'The great art of government,' said Napoleon, 'is not to let men grow old.' Manœuvres are the best means of making certain that the superior officers of an army do not grow stupid.

It was recognised, however, that something more than regimental experience was indispensable for those who provided the brains of the army, and the majority of the generals had either passed through the Staff College, or had been employed upon the staff. But just as the importance of giving such officers facilities for keeping up their knowledge and of improving their practice by means of manœuvres on a large scale was not apparently realised, so the importance of training the whole of the staff on the same system and on the same principles was overlooked. Economy again intervened. No more than thirty-two officers passed out yearly from the Staff College at Camberley, and the supply, even in time of peace, was not enough for the needs of the army. The result was that nearly

half the staff appointments in the army were filled by men drawn direct from the regiments. The majority were no doubt excellent officers. It is unquestionably an advantage, however, in any business, that the men responsible for its administration should abide by the same rules, follow the same procedure, and be thoroughly acquainted with the methods which ensure smoothness and despatch; and nowhere more than in the conduct of a campaign is friction embarrassing, delay dangerous, and misunderstanding, even on some apparently insignificant point, fraught with the possibilities of the gravest mischief. It is only by the establishment of a sound system, with which every staff officer is thoroughly familiar, and of which the details receive the most scrupulous attention, that such rocks are to be avoided.

This has been the secret of every staff which has won a name for pre-eminent efficiency, such as that of Wellington, of Lee, of Grant, of Sherman, and of Moltke. These great soldiers, distinguished each one as much for his capacity for business as for his strategical acumen, would have all things done in due order, and they would take no risks. Their first precaution, in assuming command against the enemy, was to arrange for the regular and timely issue of all orders and instructions, for the collection and transmission of reports, and for the distribution of information. They left nothing, so far as could possibly be foreseen, to the improvisation of the moment. They had no place in their military families for an officer, however brilliant his regimental reputation, who had no knowledge of staff duties in the field; and it was the rule that the administration of the army which they commanded should be conducted on a uniform system, by officers who had been trained to it. Wellington, for instance, reported to the Horse Guards that six or seven years' staff experience in the field was required to make a good staff officer; and this opinion was given near the close of the Peninsular War, when men who filled the conditions were present in every brigade.

At the outset of a war, however, it is impossible that officers who have already seen active service on the staff should be available for all appointments; and the difficulty

is to be overcome by training a large number of officers in time of peace, by training them in the same school, and, when the campaign opens, by leaving them, so far as possible, with the brigades and divisions with which they are already serving. This at least provides that the members of the staff are not strange to each other's methods, and that they are imbued with the same principles. An army when it takes the field should be organised on the same system as a regiment, and this system, thoroughly applied, is the foundation of efficiency. Not only because officers and men are comrades, acquainted with each other's excellences and a little blind to each other's foibles, but because it is thoroughly business-like, economising time, reducing labour, and producing an equality of result with a minimum of friction. It rests, like every other well-organised aggregate of human beings, upon the authority of a single will; and this authority is exercised by means of orders and instructions. Orders and instructions, then, are the mainstay of the fabric, and it is essential, where they deal with large numbers, either as regards movements, or health, or training, that they should be so clear as to penetrate the dullest brain, that they should be so comprehensive as to omit no essential detail, that the arrangements for their immediate communication to all concerned should be automatic, that, to facilitate understanding, they should be drawn up in a familiar form, that to save time they should be issued, so far as possible, at regular hours, and that everyone affected by them should understand exactly the quality of the obedience he is expected to render, whether absolute or conditional, to the letter or to the spirit. In a certain sense this method of control is purely mechanical. But it is not for that reason easily improvised, especially when troops are mobilising or the enemy is already advancing, and the prudence which takes care that it is firmly established throughout the whole army, while there is yet time, cannot be too greatly extolled. War is turmoil, and whatever tends to mitigate confusion, and to make things easier for the fighting men, is of such inestimable value that no sanely governed State can afford to dispense with it.

Great Britain, where the instinct of self-preservation

was less strong than on the Continent and where Wellington's methods of command and administration were not always rated at their true value,[1] the portals of staff employment were less jealously guarded; nor was it expected that every officer who had the good fortune to pass them should work on exactly the same lines. On the same staff one man might have passed through the Staff College, another have been trained in India, another in Egypt, and each might have different ideas of organisation, of tactics, of the importance of orders, of the form in which they should be issued, whether verbal or written, and of the amount of latitude to be accorded to those who received them. It has been noticed elsewhere how often in South Africa alone, even with small forces, the bad work of the staff was responsible for failure. At the Berea, Isandlwhana, Inhlobane Mountains, and Laing's Nek the mechanism of command was evidently defective. In each case the orders issued by the staff were either insufficient or misunderstood. It is exceedingly improbable, if history is to be trusted, that this would have been the case under Wellington or Moltke, and it is clear, therefore, that the system of filling staff appointments in the British Army of 1899 was, to say the least, a dangerous experiment.

Nor was this all. The Staff College was the only school of strategy, of organisation, of Imperial defence, in the Queen's dominions. It thus followed that those staff officers who were appointed direct from regiments presumably knew nothing whatever, except in so far as they had been able to teach themselves, of the three great subjects which are pre-eminently the province of the General Staff. It may be noticed, too, that a thorough education, embracing the higher branches of the military art, was more necessary for the staff officers of the British army than for those of any other. The most distant province, occupied by a small garrison, might, as was so often the case in South Africa, become the scene of operations which involved vast issues, and the honour, if not the existence, of the Empire might, at any moment, depend on the strategical skill, the tact, and the judgment of officers of comparatively junior rank.

[1] In two of the best military text-books, dealing specially with the command of armies, Clarke's *Lectures on Staff Duties* and Home's *Précis of Modern Tactics*, Wellington's staff was not even mentioned.

Nor is it to be overlooked that since war has become a science, and the armies of the nations are directed by men of the highest ability, an extended course of education for all staff officers has become an imperative necessity. Staff officers are not merely the assistants of the generals, but it is from their ranks that the generals are chosen; and if we would meet our enemies on equal terms our leaders must be equal to theirs, not merely in knowledge and experience, but in mental equipment. In war brain is matched against brain; the trained strategist bends all the powers of his intellect and the resources of his knowledge to deceive, to surprise, to overwhelm; and against a slower-witted and less-practised adversary the odds in his favour are great.

Previous to 1870 trained strategists were few; the majority of generals and staff officers relied simply on their experience and common sense; all were on the same footing, and there was seldom reason to fear that the enemy would display a superior science or a higher capacity for devising irresistible manœuvres. Nothing is more noticeable in the history of warfare prior to the victories of Moltke than the common level of ability of the body of officers. In many campaigns, as for instance those of the Crimea, of 1859, and of 1877–8, the commanders on both sides were men of such mediocre abilities that the issue seems to have been the sport of fortune. In others, a great mind ruled supreme, or was limited only by the dearth of material resources; but in all, the subordinate leaders and their assistants were cast in the same mould. Under such conditions any further training for generals and staff officers than that of the regiment was considered unnecessary. If they had experience of war so much the better; if they were without it they were probably no worse off than their prospective adversaries. But with the advent of Moltke to power in Berlin this comfortable system came to an abrupt end. So many trained strategists, so many accomplished subordinates, so many capable staff officers, had never before been seen in the same army as in 1866 and 1870. The campaigns of Sadowa and Sedan were intellectual triumphs, not for the directing brain alone, but for the subordinates whom he

had trained. Man for man, the generals and staff officers of Austria and France, though they had far more warlike experience, were inferior in every single respect, save physical courage, to those of Germany. At no single point, with equal or even with larger numbers, did they gain the smallest advantage; in small enterprises as in great, in the operations of isolated detachments as of the main armies, they were continually worsted, outwitted, and out-manœuvred, the lore of camp and barrack proving utterly incapable of dealing with the judgment and the science of the Kriegsakademie.

The lesson was not lost upon the world. It did not escape the notice of European soldiers that a new factor of extraordinary force had been introduced into the conduct of war, and every Continental Government determined that henceforth the brains of its generals and staff officers should be as bright and as vigorous as hard exercise could make them. For the attainment of this end the British Staff College, which had been instituted in 1858, was greatly extended and improved. It still aspired, it is true, to nothing more than laying the foundation of a useful career, and the two years' course was only an introduction to the study of war. But though it could not insure that the habits of study and of thought essential to continued mental activity were made permanent, nor prevent relapses into indolence, as a mental gymnasium the Staff College fulfilled its purpose. Impossibilities were not to be achieved, as many apparently expected, in its lecture halls. It possessed no cauldron in which folly might be transmuted into wisdom, or ambition purged of the vanity which is as dangerous to soldiers as to angels. But it could make good men better, broaden their views, strengthen their powers of reasoning, and improve their judgment. The course of studies had gradually changed its character. Up to 1893, when Colonel Hildyard took over command, its chief object was the accumulation of knowledge, and preparation for paper examinations. The new chief brought in a more practical system. Thenceforward the time of the students was largely occupied in the solving of problems of strategy, of tactics, and of organisation, both in their quarters and in the field; the paper

examinations gave way to a continual series of practical tests, applied on the ground; and this method of training, accompanied as it was by a salutary friction with other brains, not of the instructors only, but of the remainder of the class, was undoubtedly a great advance. It was identical, so far as it could possibly be made, with the processes of war, which are nothing more than the treatment of problems. It was more exclusively practical than the method pursued at any Staff College in Europe; and it was thus the best substitute for the complete experience on which Wellington laid stress, and also the best supplement to the partial experience, common to so many British officers, of one or more minor campaigns. Unfortunately, the college was far too small to supply the needs of the army. Further comment is needless; the educational equipment of the staff, no less than that of the regimental officer, was manifestly insufficient.

In addition it may be observed that centralisation, the invariable refuge of administrative incompetency, exerted an evil influence both on the efficiency of the troops and on the character of the officers. Owing in a great measure to the inelasticity and suspicion of the financial system, and to the existence of a strong civilian element at the War Office, all power, down to the pettiest details, was absorbed by the gigantic establishment in Pall Mall. Not supervision, but direct control, extending to the smallest item of interior economy, was the watchword of the great departments. To enable them to keep eye and hand on each individual officer and soldier, an interminable series of regulations, complicated by an overgrowing mass of explanations and amendments, and demanding an infinite number of reports, weekly, monthly, and annual, made the clerical work of the various commands, as far down as the companies, an astounding burden. And further, by compelling the officers, on almost all occasions, to refer for instructions either to the letter of the law or to headquarters, by thrusting them into a groove from which there was no escape, the system went far to deprive them of all power of initiative, to make them timid of responsibility and constitutionally averse from exercising their own judgment. Nor was the

system of promotion calculated to encourage professional zeal. Selection by merit, according to the regulations, was the principle, but, although matters had mended since the Zulu and the Transvaal wars, it was but timidly applied. Staff employment and brevet rank undoubtedly offered openings to those whose acquirements and capacity were above the average; but the rule still held good, to far too great an extent, that good appointments were made for the men, and not good men for the appointments.

Such, then, were the difficulties which the British officer had to contend with in home and Colonial garrisons; and while it may be admitted that the British Isles, with their teeming population, their high cultivation, their limited area of waste land, and their old and exclusive rights of property, are the most costly and least convenient of training-grounds, it is unquestionably the fact that the attitude of the nation and the legislature towards the education of the officer was one of supreme indifference. The true nature of war had never been brought home to them. They had forgotten, if they had ever heeded, the terrible warning of the Crimea. The disasters of 1881 had occurred in such exceptional circumstances, and had involved so small a portion of the army, that they had made no abiding impression; and, above all, since the days when Napoleon threatened invasion, the instinct of self-preservation had not been touched. Deep down in the national heart lay the belief that the army, after all, was only the second line of defence. So loudly had the impossibilities of invasion been preached to them, so long had been their period of immunity, that to the people of Great Britain the chances of the soldiers being called upon to protect the empire from dissolution and their countrymen from ruin, seemed remote in the extreme. They had yet to learn that the empire is vulnerable elsewhere than on the shores of the Channel or the frontiers of Hindostan; that a great navy is not an infallible safeguard: that an army unprepared for war means, in the best of cases, an enormous debt; and for their salutary lessons they had to thank an enemy whose power and resolution they had consistently despised. England owes much to Paul Kruger.

But, fortunately for the Empire, the service of the British officer was not confined to the commons of Hampshire, or to the dull barracks which rose like prisons in the roaring streets of the great cities. It was not here, where his movements were as confined as his horizon, and where for the free air and wide spaces that military training demands was substituted the crushing monotony of endless bricks and mortar, that he learned his trade. The laureate of the army has nowhere struck a truer note than in the line which crystallises the distinctive character of the British soldier.

'I have heard the reveillé from Birr to Bareilly.'

How far do its echoes reach, gathering in one sheaf the memories of a lifetime? And not the memories only, but the experiences. Experiences of many men and many lands; of divers races and of the extremes of climate; of long voyages over lonely oceans; of storm and pestilence; of service in island fortresses; of outposts in brown deserts, far beyond the verge of civilisation; of times and places where men hold their lives as lightly as their gloves; of vast cities, teeming with an alien population, overawed by a few companies of redcoats; of great armies of dark faces, loyally obedient to a handful of white officers; of warlike expeditions hastily organised, where one man has to do the work of ten; of long campaigns in waterless solitudes under a brazen sun; of enemies who give no quarter, and of comrades who know no fear.

A man must have been east of Malta before he is qualified to sit in judgment on the regular army of Great Britain. The beardless regiments of Aldershot or the Curragh can no more compare with the masses of strong men, horse, foot and artillery, soldiers of whom no conscript army has seen the like, who hold India and Egypt, than the lazy routine of English quarters can compare with the vigilance and stir of the restless East. It is in those far regions, where the menace of peril is always present, that the British army is seasoned for war. It is there, on the great training-ground, amid strife and turmoil, that the character of its officers is developed, their fibre hardened, their observation quickened, their resourcefulness called into action.

It was there, on the wild frontiers of the Empire, that the Sepoy generals, who caused the author of that felicitous phrase such an infinity of discomfort, who established the Pax Britannica in the vast jungles of Burma, who saved India in the time of the Great Mutiny, and who planted the Union Jack on the ruins of Khartoum, were fashioned out of the same material that was the sport of criticism at home.

In the constant association of bivouac and cantonment, under the shadow of a common danger, the British officers learnt, not only how to command, but how to govern, to think for themselves as well as to obey orders, to organise as well as to lead. Civilian travellers, investigating with impartial minds the conditions of the Indian and the Egyptian armies, saw with astonishment young subalterns fulfilling, and fulfilling no less wisely than cheerfully, the most onerous responsibilities. Nor did it escape such observers that the practical training of the British officer in these distant dependencies was eminently adapted to the development of the warlike qualities. The history of the last twenty years of the century afforded abundant proof. A long series of campaigns, carried out under the most adverse conditions of ground and of supply, had been brought to a successful conclusion. Large tracts of country had been added to the Empire. Tribes of fierce savages, inhabiting almost inaccessible fastnesses, had felt the weight of England's arm. The prestige of the Sirkar had never stood higher, since the days of John Lawrence and the downfall of Delhi. Burma, Hunza-Nagar, Chitral, Tirah, Uganda, Ashanti, Nigeria, and the Soudan had added fresh honours to the history of the army; and such was the nature of the fighting that these honours had been won, in great measure, by the juuior officers.

It is true that even in India the intellectual side of the officer's education received too little attention. The influence of the War Office permeated even to the most remote commands. The indifference of the nation to higher training exercised its baneful influence. Strategy was not taught at all. There was no college on the lines of Camberley for the instruction of the generals and of the staff. Voluntary associa-

tions, as in Great Britain, took the place of official institutes, and the practice of manœuvres, more, perhaps, by reason of financial difficulties than of good-will on the part of the Government, was neither consistent nor comprehensive. The garrison classes, however, had not been affected by measures of retrenchment; centralisation was gradually disappearing; the distribution of the troops into four armies had produced increased efficiency; musketry was more carefully taught; and on the whole, the level of military education was higher than that which obtained at home.

Such, then, was the British officer of 1899; as a rule a zealous and hard-working soldier, who had already received his baptism of fire, and who, if he were not always an earnest student, was imbued with an intense, if silent, pride in his profession, in the traditions of the army, and in the men he commanded. It is not to be denied that all were not cast in the same mould. In the ranks of even the best regiments were to be found men who had mistaken their vocation, and others who were possessed by an invincible indolence. But of what profession, not even excluding the navy, where the rejection of the useless and the undesirable is more summary than in any other, cannot the same be said? And it is to be remembered that even the idlest of British officers was not altogether an unwholesome subject. The unattractive and unpractical nature of his training in the United Kingdom or the Colonies was at the root of his apathy. Nauseated with dull theory, cramped by the want of responsibility, his energy unawakened by appeals to his intelligence, with no opening offered to him to acquire that higher knowledge which would have aroused his interest and kindled his ambition, and with abundant leisure at his command, it is no wonder that he sought distraction in other fields. But his instincts were healthy. If he was a mere barrack-square soldier he was generally a sportsman; and in his cricket and his football, in his hunting, his polo, and his shikar, he was at least hardening his nerve and learning the great lesson of self-control, improving his power of observation, training his eye to country, and acquiring to some extent those qualities which make the Boer so formidable an enemy.

But strong nerves, and even clear wits, when allied with ignorance of essential details, go for little in the field. Even the Boer himself took care that he learned all that his elders could tell him about the art of fighting. If the man who finds himself suddenly placed in the midst of peril, with the safety of others and his own reputation depending on his unaided judgment, knows nothing of the weapon in his hands, of the principles on which it should be employed, and of the means of putting it to the best use, he is apt to lose not only his head but his moral courage. Indolence, and its consequent ignorance, are prolific causes of military disaster.

They are not, however, the only causes. Knowledge, and even experience, may be paralysed by loss of nerve, and failure be the inevitable result. It is foolish criticism, moreover, which judges a soldier's capacity by results alone, ignoring the plain fact that accident is nowhere more active than in the game of war, that the players are always in the dark, and that every general, even the most skilful, has committed as many mistakes as he has won victories. No army was ever more thoroughly seasoned, or more thoroughly trained, than that of Wellington in the closing years of the great Napoleonic conflict. The officers, if not all the men, were veterans, with crowded years of the most varied experience at their back. Yet the army was not perfect. Famous generals were heavily defeated. The mad enterprise of New Orleans and the retreat from Plattsburg were followed by the reverse of Castalla. Even under the Duke's own eyes regiments were as ill handled as were the 58th at Laing's Nek or the 24th at Isandlwhana. Outposts were surprised. The scouts failed to bring in information. The cavalry lost opportunities of charging, and whole companies of infantry were taken prisoners. Some of the most experienced generals did the most foolish things; and at the last great battles, Quatre Bras and Waterloo, blunders were so many that Wellington refused to speak of them. It is not too much to say that had the army of the Peninsula been accompanied by a corps of Press correspondents, suffering no incident to pass unnoticed, and ruthlessly making public every instance of failure, its character, in the eyes of

those ignorant of war, would have been worse than that of the army of South Africa. Yet in the main it was a magnificent force; and the skill of the officers was not inferior to the resolution of the men. Failure, then, and even disaster, are no proof of general, and not always of individual, inefficiency; and it is not to be overlooked that failure is never so loudly blazoned abroad as during a campaign. Fame takes little or no notice of the shortcomings of the lawyer, of the parson, or the man of business; but the subaltern who rides into an ambush is criticised and derided at every breakfast-table, and his recklessness or misfortune furnishes smug common-sense with a new and unanswered argument against the inefficiency of the whole body of his brother officers.

Failure, again, is often more correctly ascribed to want of character and to antiquated tactics, as exemplified in the Transvaal in 1881, than to the absence of professional zeal. A man endeavouring to forecast the events of the South African War by the light of the system of training which obtained in the British army of 1899, would have been justified in assuming that the strategy would be indifferent, for strategy was never practised and seldom studied. He might, too, have reasonably suspected that something would be wanting in the handling of large bodies, for in this matter both generals and staff were inexperienced. And he would have been perfectly correct—especially if he had studied the experiences of the campaign of Cuba in 1898, and those on the North-West Frontier of India in 1897–8, where, for the first time, both sides were armed, partially if not wholly, with the small-bore repeating rifle—had he considered the tactics of the three arms to be but ill adapted to the new conditions. An enormous advance, it is true, had been made in tactical training since Amajuba. The annual allowance of ammunition for target practice had been largely increased. Drill in close order had been relegated to its proper place; the time given to the practice of spectacular movements had been greatly reduced, and the barrack-square, whenever men and space were available, was deserted for the open country. All this was to the good. Fighting was really taught. But, in some respects, it was a kind of fighting that

had never been seen by mortal eyes. The secret of success in battle is to concentrate superior strength, moral, physical, or both, at the decisive point; and such concentration, as a rule, is not only a protracted process, but requires the closest co-operation between the various units. The manœuvres by which the general designs to achieve his object must, in execution, be rapid, orderly, and well combined; the whole mass must be animated by one purpose, and every individual move under the same impulse. The British army of 1899 was taught that this co-operation and cohesion were to be attained, so far as the troops were concerned, by means of discipline. But discipline is of two sorts: the first, mechanical discipline, best illustrated by the solid charge of the two-deep line, the men shoulder to shoulder, dressing on the colours, and the rear rank with ported arms; the second, intelligent discipline, best illustrated, perhaps, by a pack of well-trained hounds, running in no order, but without a straggler, each making good use of his instinct, and following the same object with the same relentless perseverance.

It was mechanical discipline, absorbing all individuality, forbidding either officer or man to move or to fire without a direct command, and throwing no further responsibility on the subordinate leaders than that of merely passing on orders and seeing that they were obeyed, the discipline of Isandlwhana and Laing's Nek, that was still the ideal of the British army in 1899. The system had certainly been modified. Stereotyped formations in the attack had been abandoned, except by the artillery. It had been attempted to give the lines of infantry skirmishers more elasticity by breaking them up into groups; and a certain measure of independence in action was granted to the company commanders. But the principle was resolutely adhered to of keeping everything in hand by means of precise orders, of formations in which every man acted in accordance with a carefully defined routine, and of a continual looking to, and dependence on, the supreme authority. The infantry, for instance, were taught to move to the attack of a position in regular lines, or by the alternate advances of the units into which it was divided; and the regulation distances between successive bodies of troops were to be as far as possible

preserved. In fact there was a constant endeavour to make battle conform to the parade-ground, to apply drill of the most mechanical character to the bullet-swept field, to depend for success on courage and subordination, and to relegate intelligence and individuality to the background.

But under fire which begins to kill at two thousand yards, not, as in the Brown Bess era, at two hundred, troops cannot march forward like a wall until they see the whites of their enemies' eyes, and combination and cohesion are only to be secured by the free exercise of trained intelligence, supported by individual discipline. Had the Boers possessed the last they would have been perfect skirmishers. As it was, their system of establishing a strong firing line at decisive range by trickling forward a few men at a time, who crept on from boulder to boulder, from bush to bush, as at the Ingogo and Amajuba, and who were covered also by the bullets of detachments posted behind convenient shelter in rear, was far less costly, and far better adapted to counteract the terrible power of the new armament, than the system which prevailed, not in the British army alone, but in every continental army of the day.

The fallacy that a thick firing line in open country can protect itself, outside decisive range, by its own fire, had not yet been exposed. It was not yet realised that the defender, occupying ingeniously constructed trenches, and using smokeless powder, is practically invulnerable both to gun and rifle, until the assailant gets so close as to actually see the heads behind the parapets. Then, and then only, does the fire of the attack begin to vie in accuracy with that of its opponents. Nor had the effect of the flat trajectory been rightly estimated. It was still expected, notwithstanding the lessons of history, that a firing line at close ranges would be under the control of its leaders, that officers would be in a position to command, and the men in a position to obey. It was not understood that under a hail of bullets, fired from behind cover, men in the open must fight each for his own hand, using such shelter as he can find, advancing in such manner as is best suited to the ground immediately about him, choosing his own target, expending his

ammunition as seems good to him, and dependent on his own resources. The psychology of the breechloader battle had not been studied. It had been forgotten that the firing line in a hot engagement is a situation which makes the most exacting demands on human nature. It presents no solid front, but a chain of scattered individuals, surging forwards and backwards, susceptible to the lightest breath of panic, absorbed, almost to the verge of catalepsy, in their deadly work, and often remaining in position only because to retire is certain death. Yet on these individuals, on the skill with which they handle their weapons, utilise the ground, and, more than all, on their moral fortitude, their determination to conquer, their spirit of self-sacrifice, success depends. Nowhere is man so utterly alone as in the firing line at close quarters; yet nowhere is it more essential that he should be forgetful of self; and it follows that the moral training of the soldier should be as thorough as the physical. The discipline of the mass is insufficient. The man must be animated by something more than the spirit of unthinking obedience. He must have been taught, and taught so thoroughly that the idea has become an instinct, to depend on himself alone, to feel that his individual skill and individual endurance are the most important factors in the fight, and that when orders no longer reach him, he must be his own general. The doctrine is difficult, but least so to the men of the free races, whose fibre has been strengthened by long centuries of free government and individual liberty. It was not to strict discipline, not to experience of war, nor even to native hardihood, that Sir Charles Napier attributed the military virtues of the British soldier, but to the British constitution.

The principles, however, on which the assault of a position was to be conducted, as laid down by authority, had been loyally accepted and faithfully followed by the British infantry, with the consequence that the training of the individual officer and soldier, as skirmisher and scout, was sacrificed, in great measure, to the training of the mass. Intelligence was repressed; initiative discouraged; drill overdone. Refinements were introduced into the practice of brigades and battalions which went beyond the precision of the official text-books; and

every action of war, infected by the precise methods of the attack, became more or less a mechanical process.

Fortunately the war on the North-West Frontier had supplied a practical commentary on systems of attack and training which had not passed unnoticed. The authorities, it is true, gave no sign that they grasped the significance of the innumerable skirmishes, in which discipline was often so hard put to it to hold its own against the wily tactics and invisible fire of the mountaineers. But there were many officers, especially in India, with more leisure to give to the consideration of the problems of fighting than the overworked officials at headquarters, who realised the paramount importance of individuality, the vulnerability and weakness of long thick lines, the necessity for training the infantry to attack and to defend in small groups, and of according to such groups, as well as to the individuals who composed them, a large measure of independence. It was long ago laid down by a veteran of the Peninsula that nothing developed the readiness and intelligence of the junior officers and the men so quickly as patrolling in small bodies, entailing as it did constant fighting; and it has also been noted that the regiments who were the most skilful at this kind of work were the most famous, throughout Wellington's campaigns, for their exemplary discipline, both in quarters and in action. The lesson was recalled in 1898; and in many commands, not in India alone, the generals and the regimental officers inaugurated, on their own volition, a new system of training which was practically based upon that of the Light Brigade under Sir John Moore. Of this system the keynote was the efficiency, the discipline, and the quick wits, sharpened by constant practice in independent fighting, of the individual skirmisher; and it bade fair, as soon as it should become universal, to convert the army into a host of active and resourceful men, professional in the best sense of the word, and far superior to an equal number of mere human automata.[1]

[1] The opinion is not infrequently heard that individuality is injurious to discipline. The examples of the Light Division, and of many of the finest regiments in both Union and Confederate armies, effectually dispose of this objection. But it is to be remembered that these regiments had excellent officers, who thoroughly understood the needs of war.

In the cavalry and artillery the value of individuality was less highly appreciated than in the infantry. Both were thoroughly well drilled, and, taking other European armies as a standard, well trained. But the principles which controlled their conduct in action were those of an age which knew not shrapnel, the machine-gun, and the magazine rifle. Great masses of artillery had proved their efficacy in 1870–1. Brigades of horsemen, riding knee to knee, and sweeping the field with lance or sabre, had found a few opportunities of charging home into the enemy's ranks; and what had been done then it was thought might be done again, far more effectively, under more experienced leadership. It was not suspected that the long lines of guns ranged at regular intervals on the bare slopes of Moltke's battlefields, which had rained such ruin on the French columns, were already an anachronism; or that cavalry, which was unable to reply to the adversary's fire, and, except when actually charging, was useless either for attack or defence, was a waste both of men and of mobility.

It was not so much that the tactics of each arm were not abreast of recent developments, as that the fundamental conception of the unified action of the three arms was inadequate. Such action is generally placed under two headings, attack and defence. But as defence is, as a rule, merely a preparation for counter-attack, the distinction, in a discussion of broad principles, may be disregarded, and attack be taken as the end of combined tactics.

Attack is of two sorts, either direct and frontal, or enveloping. The former unaided by the latter, according to the experience of all ages, is rarely successful.[1] Under certain conditions, such as peculiarly favourable ground, a great superiority of numbers, of discipline, or of *moral* on the part of the assailants, it may be worth trying; but the issue, in nine cases out of ten, depends, like a charge of cavalry against infantry and guns, on surprise; and opportunities for surprise, when

[1] A study of warfare in the Middle Ages, so admirably analysed in Oman's *History of the Art of War*, furnishes abundant proof of the fact that attack on a narrow front, as at Bannockburn, Crécy, Poitiers, has always been disastrous, even when the defenders have been numerically the weaker.

troops are well trained, do not often offer. Otherwise, the force of which the front overlaps the other has at least seven chances out of ten in its favour.

As weapons improved, and the power of fire became greater, enveloping tactics became both more effective and more easy of application. The strength of the local defence against direct attack made it more difficult for a force which was surrounded, or whose line of retreat was barred, to break its way to safety; while the increased effect of enfilade or reverse fire, owing to greater range and rapidity, shortened the resistance of the troops exposed to it. To enclose the enemy, therefore, in a ring of fire became the objective of those generals who appreciated the potentialities of modern weapons; and such crowning triumphs as Marengo, Ulm, Waterloo, Vicksburg, Appomattox, Woerth, Sedan, the Lisaine, where whole armies were obliterated, proved that envelopment, and not mere weight of numbers, was the true secret of decisive success. Just as the English line in the Peninsula invariably routed the French columns, so the commander who knew when and where to extend his front, throwing forward the flanks, and stopping each avenue of retreat, invariably triumphed over a less subtle enemy.[1]

Even South Africa afforded illustrations, for at Isandlwhana, at Laing's Nek, at the Ingogo, on Amajuba, and in many a fight between Boer and Kaffir, victory remained with the line that overlapped.

It would be inaccurate to say that a truth that was instinctively realised in the wilds of the Transvaal was unknown in the war schools of Europe and America. But a truth may be accepted, and even taught, without producing more than a faint impression on the minds, or affecting the practice, of those concerned. This was the case in Europe and America with the great principle of envelopment. Such men as Moltke, Lee, Jackson, Sherman, Sheridan, and, in a less degree, Grant, grasped it at once; for throughout their campaigns the endeavour to apply it is always to be observed. But with others,

[1] Napoleon, it is true, won brilliant victories by breaking through his adversary's front, but none of these, not even Austerlitz, Eckmuhl or Ligny, were so absolutely complete in their results as those enumerated above.

less clear of brain and unable to cast loose from tradition, depth, momentum, and weight of numbers were considered the decisive factors in attack. There was an undeniable prejudice in favour of hard hitting and forcing the decision. *L'audace, l'audace, toujours l'audace*, was held to express the spirit which should inspire the attack. To pile battalion on battalion and brigade on brigade became a usual feature of the manœuvre-ground; and it was believed that a still sterner discipline and a higher *moral* would enable men to push forward under the fire of the new weapons in the same dense formations which had met with such fearful punishment in '70 and '77.

These ideas gradually obscured the field of tactical thought and practice. The principle of envelopment was not indeed forgotten, but instead of being kept to the front, as the keystone of the arch of battle, and the basis of decisive success, it was gradually subordinated to minor considerations. The formations which had been successful against the French chassepot, a breechloader with a high trajectory and no magazine, were considered suitable to fields dominated by the raking fire of the small-bore; and it was thought that the effect of enormous masses of artillery, which, against an enemy who disdained cover and habitually fought in close order, had undoubtedly been great, would be far greater with a more deadly projectile and an improved powder. The fire of a superior force would, it was believed, be so overwhelming, that the Germans laid down, in their instructions for field exercises, that a direct attack, provided the troops making it were not less than threefold stronger in men and guns than those of the defence, would probably be successful. The English regulations adopted the same ruling.

The consequences of these false conceptions were mischievous in the extreme.

In the first place, the importance of turning a formidable position, and of forcing the enemy to fight on ground which he had not had time to study or to prepare, was practically ignored; and entrenchments having lost their terrors, the tactics of the manœuvre-ground, as well as those of the lecture-hall, resolved themselves into a straightforward rush, a heavy frontal attack,

generally but not always combined with an attack in flank; and Gravelotte, where the French were merely driven back with half the loss they had inflicted, rather than Sedan, where they were surrounded, became the type of the future battle. But if the effect on the officers was bad, narrowing their conceptions of leadership to a single operation, the effect on the training of the three arms was worse. Nothing was thought of but working in mass, of concentrating large numbers on a narrow space, and of throwing them forward with mechanical precision against the weak point of the enemy's position. Such tactics made few demands on elasticity or on individual initiative. Cavalry, artillery, and infantry moved in stereotyped formations and manœuvred in accordance with fixed rules. Ground was very little considered; and field-days, especially when large numbers of troops were engaged, degenerated into drill.

Had envelopment been the practice of the armies, a very different state of things would have prevailed. Tactics would at once have assumed a wider scope. The three arms would have been compelled to adopt a far larger variety of methods. The cavalry, on whom would have fallen the duty of barring or of threatening the enemy's line of retreat, would have been obliged to attack and to defend positions with the fire-arm. The artillery, in order to complete the circle, would have been obliged to make a few guns, acting independently, at wide intervals, do the work of many; while the infantry, creeping, like the Boers at the Ingogo, round the flanks, and holding the enemy fast within a ring of fire, would have been distributed according to the ground; at one point, where the line was weak, on a narrow front, at others, where it was strong, scattered in small bodies, and everywhere taking advantage of all cover. Such tactics, involving, as a rule, great extension over perhaps a difficult and broken country, would undoubtedly have thrown a heavy burden of responsibility on the subordinate leaders, have increased the difficulty of combination, and have made supervision, on the part of the higher commanders and their staffs, almost an impossibility. But they would have compelled officers of all ranks to use their wits, to look at ground with a keener eye, to vary their methods, and to

consider every detail of their profession from the standpoint of war alone.

That Continental armies should have fallen into the slough of crude conjecture and imperfect forecast is hardly surprising. Men, especially in practical matters, are always inclined to remember what they have seen rather than what they hear, and to give more weight to their own stale experience, gained under obsolete conditions, than to the impressions of others. That the tacticians of Germany and France, absorbed by the memory of the crowded and epoch-making incidents in which they had borne part, should pay too little attention to fresh developments was perhaps excusable. But if military Europe tested everything by the light of the campaign of 1870–1, there was no need, to say the least, that Great Britain should slavishly follow the example. Her army had experience of more recent date and more varied character than those of her neighbours. Her wars were numerous, and though limited in scope, they had made her soldiers practically acquainted with the power of the latest armament. Not a few of her officers had witnessed the fierce battles of 1877-8 and the havoc wrought by the Martini-Henry. In the campaigns in Afghanistan the enemy had been partially equipped with modern rifles. In the first Egyptian expedition shrapnel and the breechloader had been employed by both sides; and in the Tirah campaign of 1897–8 a number of the mountaineers had found means to provide themselves with the same pattern of repeating small-bore as the British infantry. Moreover, British officers had carefully followed and minutely reported on the interesting operations in Cuba and the Philippines. There was thus no lack of the best evidence as to the phenomena of the modern battlefield, and it would have been easy for the military authorities, had the proper machinery existed, to have evolved from the data at disposal a far sounder theory of tactics than that which had been built up by the German general staff.

But in the British army no means were provided for collecting, much less for analysing, the facts and phenomena of the battlefield and the range. Scientific investigation was

no part of the duties of the General Staff. History and its teachings were ignored. Experience was regarded as the private property of individuals, not as a public asset, to be applied to the benefit of the army as a whole. The idea of working out the processes of the future from the occurrences of the past was foreign to the national conception of the art of war; and though objections were rarely raised to the increase of those branches of the staff which dealt with fortification, with building, or with ordnance, the suggestion that a branch should be established for the purpose of dealing with strategical and tactical problems involving both technical knowledge and patient study, was howled down by the economists. At the beginning of the War of Secession the War Department of the United States looked upon a staff as merely ornamental and exceedingly expensive. Forty years later, much the same idea prevailed in Great Britain. The staff was an instrument for registering decisions, for enforcing discipline, for interpreting regulations. It had never entered into the mind of any Secretary of State to imagine that those who composed it needed time for thought, for study, for watching or for anticipating new developments in military science. The result was that when manuals of tactics and instructions for field-exercises were required, the deductions of foreign theorists were accepted without question. The officials responsible for the training of the army had neither the leisure nor the means for prosecuting independent research and arriving at independent conclusions. An examination of recent evidence would have revealed the following :—

1. The impotence of artillery against well-constructed entrenchments.
2. The enhanced difficulty of reconnaissance.
3. The practical impossibility of approaching a strong position except in the very loosest skirmishing order, and by making good successive points.
4. The fallacy of a firing line at long ranges securing itself from heavy loss by its own fire.
5. The paramount importance of envelopment.

It is probable, moreover, that a body of staff officers devoted to the study of war would have paid special attention to the campaigns of the United States. A kindred army, organised on the same voluntary system, making the same large use of irregular levies, possessing the same characteristics, conducting operations under the same conditions of rough and wooded country, and continually fighting against space, was a far better model for the forces of Great Britain and her Colonies than the hosts of the Continent. The cavalry tactics of the Secession War would, if thoroughly studied, have thrown a far brighter light on the needs of the future and the method of meeting them than the achievements of the German horsemen in 1870. But the most brilliant pages in the history of the mounted arm remained practically a sealed book; and because the American squadrons made more use of fire than of *l'arme blanche*, they were generally regarded as mere mounted infantry. But it was not the soldiers who were at fault. In the year 1895, after long deliberation, Parliament produced an elaborate scheme of army organisation. The reforms contained therein were drastic. National defence was henceforward to be conducted on business principles. Efficiency in the field, adequate preparation for war, and economical administration were to be the watchwords of Pall Mall. The importance of sound principles was not overlooked. Responsibilities were clearly defined; decentralisation was foreshadowed, and the claims of both strategy and tactics received due recognition. Had the scheme been carried out in the spirit in which it was conceived, the army would have been better prepared than at any period of its existence to meet any emergency which might arise. But it is one thing to order, another to execute. It was laid down by Parliament that the chief duty of the commander-in-chief should be the provision and maintenance of plans of offence and defence, applicable to the whole Empire, and that the adjutant-general should be responsible for the training of the troops. That one man, unaided, could fulfil either of these functions was manifestly impossible; and, from a business point of view, it would seem that the first step of those entrusted with the supervision of the new scheme should

have been to ascertain the amount of assistance the commander-in-chief and the adjutant-general would require. But this was the very last question the Secretary of State and the permanent officials at the War Office desired to ask; an increase of the headquarters staff would have involved a conflict with the Treasury and an addition to the estimates. It thus happened that not one officer was added to the staff—already inadequate—of either the commander-in-chief or the adjutant-general; and the good intentions of Parliament were deliberately nullified by its own servants. No less than twenty officers, generally of high rank, were employed at headquarters on duties connected with forts and barracks; to deal with the problems with which the security of the Empire was incontestably bound up, not even a single subaltern was made available. To the fine spirit of the regular rank and file a brave enemy has offered a generous and graceful tribute.[1] A certain section of his own people, as well as the majority of foreigners, preferred to regard the man who took the shilling as a mere mercenary, possessing only the instincts of a hired bravo. Never was mistake more gross. The cottage homes of the British race, whether they stand in the long unlovely streets of manufacturing cities, in villages old enough to have sent house-carles to Hastings and archers to Agincourt, in the Highland glens, or on the green hillsides of Wales, were not less loyal than the great houses. Britain, even among the lowest of her soldiers, is still a name to conjure with. Nor is it to be forgotten that every decade of the century had seen a sensible improvement in the class and character of the soldier. The ranks in 1899 were no longer a refuge and a reformatory for the children of the slums. The wastrel and blackguard found short shrift in the barrack-room; and although the exigencies of recruiting permitted a certain proportion of undesirables to degrade the uniform, the Queen's soldiers, as an

[1] 'Were it not that so many of my compatriots lacked that which is so largely characteristic of the British soldier, the quality of patriotism and the intense desire to uphold the traditions of his nationality, I would ask what people in the world would have been able to conquer the Afrikanders?'—*My Reminiscences of the Anglo-Boer War*, General Ben Viljoen, p. 519.

almost universal rule, were worthy representatives of the industrial classes.

The value of the non-regular forces of the Empire, the Militia, the Yeomanry, the Volunteers, and the colonial forces, differed in proportion to the relative instruction and experience of the officers and men. The material, without exception, was excellent. Though less indifferent to death than the regulars, one and all were animated by a soldierly desire of proving their manhood in the field. But, as a rule, the importance of preparation in time of peace was underestimated. The factors which make for efficiency in war were not thoroughly understood by the troops themselves; and the question of their training, which must perforce run on other lines than that of the regulars, had never, in default of a thinking department of the staff, been properly threshed out at headquarters.

England, in all her greater and many of her smaller wars, has always sought assistance outside the ranks of her professional soldiers. To her Militia, her colonial contingents, and her native levies she owes much. The conquest of Canada, of India, of West Africa, of the Soudan, are honours which should be emblazoned on other standards than those of the regular army; and it is hardly too much to say that without the aid of the Militia, not only in supplying a constant stream of recruits, but in furnishing garrisons for the fortresses, the victories of the Peninsula and the Crimea would have been impossible. In South Africa the duties of the Militia, guarding long lines of exposed communication and escorting convoys, were more onerous than those which they had hitherto fulfilled. That the force, as a whole, was fit for these duties, involving constant vigilance, skill in the selection and preparation of positions, and much rough fighting, can hardly be maintained. Very few of the battalions were to be trusted when acting independently or on the offensive. Their peace training was at fault. As an almost universal rule the few weeks of their annual stay in camp were devoted to drill and ceremonial; of skirmishing, of outposts, of scouting, they knew nothing whatever, and their officers, whose professional education was of the most meagre sort, were incapable of teaching them. As a set-off, their discipline was

generally excellent. It is not to be overlooked, however, that the pick of the men forming the so-called Militia Reserve were drafted into the ranks of the regulars. This system was undoubtedly most prejudicial to the efficiency of the Militia units, but it may be questioned whether it was more short-sighted than the neglect of successive Governments to give the officers of the Militia a thoroughly sound professional education, and of the military authorities to insist on marching past being discarded in favour of the practices useful in the field. A Militia which had never done anything else but skirmish over broken ground would have proved a far more useful auxiliary than one which had never manœuvred except in the close order of the days of Wellington. But the defects of the constitutional force cannot be charged against either officers or men ; and on the opposite side of the account stands the splendid spirit of self-sacrifice, which, in the hour of the Empire's need, induced them to volunteer by whole battalions for service beyond the seas.

In 1899 the Volunteers of the United Kingdom had yet to give proof of their value as fighting men. Numerically they were an imposing body, and the greater number found no difficulty in satisfying the official conditions of efficiency. Those conditions, however, were altogether illusory. It by no means followed that because a man was an effective Volunteer he was an effective soldier. His training, compared with that of the professional soldier or the Afrikander irregular, was practically no training at all. His opportunities of learning his work in the field were fewer even than those of the militiaman. He was required to fire no more than forty rounds annually, and his study of ground was of the most perfunctory character. His intelligence, it is true, reached a high standard, and to the performance of his military duties he brought a freshness and individuality which was no bad substitute for experience. It was difficult, however, to overcome his initial disadvantages. Life in the British Islands, except perhaps on the moors and forests of the North, was, and is, no preparation for war whatever. The great bulk of the population lacked every single characteristic of the stockman, the shikari, or the mountaineer. They were as strange to the face of the earth and all its secrets as the

inhabitant of Central Europe to the sea and ships. They knew nothing of the use of their arms or the care of horses. And to counterbalance these deficiencies they had only their pride of race, their familiarity with rough sports, and the national predilection for discipline and good order. The principle of self-help, however, is deeply imbedded in the English character; and for the majority of the Volunteers self-help did far more than had ever been anticipated by the War Office. In those regiments, and they were not a few, which were commanded by men who were alive to the nature of the responsibilities they had undertaken, and who had the gift of inspiring others, a good proportion of both the officers and men, often at great personal inconvenience, took their soldiering seriously, and gave the larger part of their spare time to fitting themselves for service against the Queen's enemies. But alongside great zeal there was great apathy. Not every unit was well commanded; and there was a great dearth of officers capable of imparting practical instruction on the manœuvre ground. Thus the battalions were unequal in themselves. Even in the best a large number of all ranks were merely nominally effective; and while the pick of the force were but little inferior to the regulars, the bulk of the residue were merely half-trained recruits.[1] The average, then, of real efficiency was lower than that of the Militia; and to have despatched regiments of town-bred Volunteers, commanded by inexperienced officers, against an army of riflemen as skilful as the Boers would, even had it been possible, have been like setting foxhounds to run down a pack of wolves. It was still possible, however, to make use of this huge reserve, and before the war the War Office had decided that in case of necessity each battalion in the field should be reinforced by a Volunteer company or companies of the territorial regiment, commanded by Volunteer officers, and serving for a specified time. This plan

[1] The idea of transforming the Militia and Volunteers into an army of marksmen, capable of coping with the picked infantry of the Continent, is a vain dream. Marksmanship in a great mass of men depends on discipline and not on patriotism, and to believe that a large mass of men will become efficient soldiers, except under compulsion, is to disregard human nature.

answered admirably. In a very short time the Volunteers were not to be distinguished, except perhaps that they depended upon themselves rather than upon their officers, from the regulars.

The existing regiments of Yeomanry, in 1899, were of much the same stamp as the battalions of Volunteers, but, as a general rule, very little work was done outside the brief annual training. All that could be said for this branch of the auxiliary forces was that most of the men could ride, that few of them could shoot, and that no inconsiderable number lived an outdoor life and had some eye for country, and that the officers were drawn from the class of landowners.

Of the colonial contingents some enjoyed far greater advantages than others. The Canadians, for instance, possessed many of the attributes of regulars. The Militia of the Dominion have always been noted for their military spirit. Face to face with a mighty neighbour, with whom, in time past, their quarrels had been frequent, they were not only actuated by the sentiment of self-preservation, but they inherited the traditions of many fierce campaigns. Moreover, disturbances within the frontier, the rebellions of 1870 and 1895, had given them employment and experience in years comparatively recent; while the exigencies of a new country, ever opening up new territories, and the ceaseless conflict with Nature, in her most gigantic and repellent form, had added to the enterprise of the Anglo-Saxon and the daring of the Frenchman the individuality and resourcefulness of the pioneer. Nor had the Colonial Government been unmindful of the insecurity of an open frontier of 3,000 miles. The small force of regulars was admirably trained. Schools of instruction existed for the Militia; camp and field-days were not infrequent. In many respects, then, the Canadians were on the same level with the Boers. Generations of voyageurs, of hunters, of men of the mountains and the forest, had produced the same instincts as those which distinguished the herdsmen of the *veld*; warlike experience was not wanting; and the needs of active service were appreciated. But beyond all these the Canadians were fully alive to the importance of discipline, and the public opinion of the soldiery was indisposed to condone infractions of the military code. The regiments of the

great Transatlantic colony possessed that backbone of cohesion the absence of which so enfeebled the Republican forces.

The numerous contingents furnished by South African loyalists, especially at the beginning of the war, were no unworthy opponents of the commandos. Many of the men had seen service in native wars; the majority could ride, shoot, and scout, and officers of experience were generally forthcoming. Some of the regiments, notably those raised from the refugees of the Rand, in Natal, were conspicuous throughout for good discipline and resolute valour. Composed of men of good station and trained intelligence, accustomed to sport and eager to avenge long years of contumely and insult, they were as useful on reconnaissance as in battle. Others, however, drawn from a different class, whose officers were often ill selected, were not easily broken to subordination; and while the men individually had all the makings of serviceable soldiers, *en masse* they were of little value. The Colonial Police, without exception, were clever scouts and excellent mounted infantry.

It was said of the Australians and New Zealanders that with three months' training under good officers they would have been unsurpassed by any irregular force which served in South Africa. The riders of the Bush had no practical acquaintance with war; their officers were as ignorant as themselves; they had no permanent organisation; and they were so accustomed, in their civilian avocations, to act each man for himself, that the claims of discipline were at first irksome. If they knew and trusted their leaders they did well, especially in small enterprises, where a few brave men, working intelligently together, were all that were needed. Under strange officers they were restive, and orders of which they did not understand the object were often reluctantly and sluggishly obeyed. Yet their aid was invaluable to the army. They were fine horsemen, though indifferent horsemasters; they knew much of ground; they were used to the rifle; they could shift for themselves in the most uncomfortable circumstances; and if, at the outset of the campaign, they were less cunning than the Boers, less capable tacticians, less apt at ruse and stratagem, it

was not long before they had learned every trick of the warfare of the *veld*.

When the war in South Africa becomes part of the materials of those whose business it is to extract useful lessons from past experience, it will probably be considered that the chief defect of the great mass of British soldiery was their unreadiness for war. To all intents and purposes the organisation of the army was on the same low level as that obtaining in the Boer Republics; it had not advanced beyond the battalion—equivalent to the commando—and the need of a further development was not yet realised. Inasmuch as the success of Germany, the model and exemplar of the Horse Guards, over both Austria and France was in great part due to her thorough organisation, this attitude of indifference was almost inexplicable. The truth was that with the science of organisation, the official mind, naval, military, and civil, was unfamiliar, and that, so far as the army was concerned, there was no branch of the Staff within whose scope its application fell. In default of any mature consideration of this important subject the ideas put forward were so vague and unpractical as to produce not the smallest effect on public opinion. Something, indeed, was accomplished for good. The strength of the army was economically raised from 200,000 to 280,000 men by keeping 80,000 (misnamed the Army Reserve) on perpetual furlough; and, in case of a foreign expedition, an army corps and cavalry division, completely manned and equipped, would be ready to embark as soon as the transports were assembled.

But this was all. The army remained a vast congeries of ever-shifting atoms, of regiments, battalions, and batteries, waiting for the stroke of war to come together in the manageable bodies which we called brigades, divisions, and army corps,[1]

[1] It is one of the first rules of organisation that eight units are as many as one commander can manage in war. The same rule applies to the training and administration of the armed forces in time of peace; and this explains why armies are organised in semi-independent bodies of the three arms, by the Romans called legions and cohorts, by the moderns army corps and divisions. It is almost needless to add that these rules had never even been heard of by some of the fiercest critics of the War Office.

and to become familiar with each other, with their commanders, and with the Staff. The situation was almost unparalleled. Parliament, absolutely ignorant of the whole question, was quite ready to do anything which the military experts thought advisable. The experts, on the other hand, called loudly on the statesmen to tell them for what purposes the army was maintained. Such knowledge, they declared, was an essential precedent to economical administration and a sound system of organisation. The statesmen refused to commit themselves.

In the first place, no two authorities were agreed as to the employment of the army in the case of war; as to its distribution in time of peace; as to the strength which should be maintained. Some, believing that invasion was a chimera, considered the Guards and the auxiliary forces an adequate garrison for the United Kingdom. Others would have a force large enough to strike a heavy blow abroad, to follow the steps of Wellington, or to attack another Sebastopol, kept fully equipped at Aldershot and the Curragh. Others, placing their whole trust in the navy, would limit any foreign expedition to a couple of divisions at most; while others, incapable of reading the lessons of the history to which they continually appealed, believed that the punishment of some savage ruler, the invasion of Ashanti, or the destruction of Benin, was the only sort of warlike operation on which, in an enlightened age, our troops could be engaged. In the second place, to lay down the functions of the army was indubitably the province of the expert. It was the strategist at the War Office, familiar with the traditional conditions of national defence, with the weak points of the Empire, with the resources of possible enemies, with the nature and extent of the help which the navy, in case of a great war, would demand from the land forces, who alone could authoritatively lay down the functions of the army. The question had very little to do with politics, for politics, except as regards a very few general principles, are concerned only with the needs of the moment, and it is impossible even for the most prescient statesman to predict the numerous combinations which may justify, or necessitate, armed intervention, even in the near future.

The cynic might observe that the principal use of the British army is to deal with emergencies which, until they are imminent, are absolutely unforeseen. How is it possible, he would say, if history is worth anything as a guide, to fix the strength or the duties of the British army? Who could have anticipated, for instance, in the year 1775, that for the next six years the mother country would have to maintain a fixed force of 40,000 or 50,000 men in her own Colonies? Did even Pitt imagine, when he accepted the challenge of France in 1792, that before the war was over more than 220,000 British soldiers would be serving abroad on different theatres of war? Who, at the time of the Great Exhibition of 1852, had the faintest premonition that within six years Great Britain would have placed a fixed force of 80,000 in the Crimea, and another of 96,000 white soldiers in Hindostan? Nor is Great Britain exceptional in the obscurity of her future. At the beginning of 1861 the army of the United States consisted of 25,000 men, and there were few who doubted that it was quite large enough to fulfil the purposes for which it existed. Twelve months later nearly a million recruits had been enrolled, and the purpose for which they stood in arms it had not entered the heart of man to imagine.

But above and beyond the great crises which, so long as human affairs are under human direction, are as frequent as they are inevitable in the national life, it was by no means difficult to define the functions and the strength of the regular army. The lamp of history, trimmed and regulated by the hand of strategic genius, casts a permanent radiance, exposing the smallest detail, on each step in the growth and the expansion of the British Empire; and it seems impossible that one who studies Mahan's pages should be at a loss to comprehend the part to be played in future wars by the troops of the Crown. War with a great Power, or group of Powers, must involve now, as in the past, a fierce, and possibly prolonged, conflict for the command of the sea; for it is absolutely certain that to-day, as in the day of Napoleon, the maritime supremacy of Great Britain must be the objective of its enemies. But in the long struggle which ended at Trafalgar it was not upon the navy

alone that the burden fell. The operations, though in every respect maritime, were by no means exclusively confined to blue water nor carried through by the broadsides of the battleships and the cutlasses of the boarders. The troops did their full share. They captured more arsenals than fortresses; more ships of war than regimental colours; more positions on the seaboard, commanding or threatening the trade routes, than inland lines of entrenchments. They were more familiar with long voyages than with long marches; with sudden embarkations and swift onsets than with the protracted manœuvres of a regular campaign. Steam and electricity have wrought great changes in the warfare of the sea, but it would be unwise in the extreme to imagine that in any future conflict the navy will be able to dispense with the help of the army in breaking down the enemy's resistance, in destroying his bases and supply depots, in cutting his communications, in mastering strategical positions, and in protecting the trade routes. These objectives will still be the main factors of every strategic problem, in some respects—owing to the enormously increased volume of commerce and to the far larger needs of ships of war—of greater importance than heretofore; and thus the same principles, the same conditions, under which such problems were dealt with in the past will reappear in the future. The first necessity, then, of imperial defence, so far as the army is concerned, is the maintenance of at least three army corps[1] of regulars, ready to render immediate support when the navy asks for it.

A fallacy which prevailed before the South African War was that any such force, quartered in the United Kingdom, might contrive to pay a double debt. Not only would it serve as a deterrent against invasion, but it might be employed in reinforcing any portion of our land frontiers, such as South Africa, which was threatened with attack. The idea arose from a misconception of what would be required of the army in case of a maritime struggle. The possibility of active aid to the fleet was overlooked; and it seems to have been held that the business of the troops was defence, and defence only.

[1] This number is based on an analysis of the work demanded from and accomplished by the army in the wars with France in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It is essential, however, that any force which is to be at the beck and call of the navy should be within reach of the theatre of war; and, judging from the past, it would seem probable that the main theatre will probably be the narrow seas of Europe, together with the North Atlantic and the Caribbean; for it is in these seas that the flow of trade will be most readily checked, and it is on these seas that are to be found the great dockyards, many of the greatest capitals, the wealthiest commercial ports, and also the ganglion of the vital lines of communication. A distinction, then, must always be made between that part of the army whose function it is to support the navy and that part which is charged with the defence of our outlying provinces. Had this been done before 1899 the borders of Cape Colony and Natal would have been so strongly held that even Kruger would have shrunk from the task of forcing them. Long before the Raid the South African garrison should have been increased to 30,000 or 40,000 men, and why the home authorities should have been reluctant to decrease the force at home by those numbers is inconceivable. South Africa, in almost every respect, was a most eligible quarter, admirably adapted for the training of the troops, admirably situated as a strategic centre, whence the navy might be supported or India reinforced, in the Southern seas.

That the regular army was large enough to carry out its normal functions can hardly be questioned. There were men enough, had they been properly distributed, to give protection to the most remote settlements; to furnish a strong backbone to the Militia and Volunteers of the British Isles in case of attempted invasion,[1] and, when the command of the sea was fairly secure, to furnish at least three army corps for maritime

[1] Towards the question of invasion the Government took up a most sensible line. Many amateur strategists, and notably one great newspaper, had brought themselves to believe that invasion was a chimera; others thought that a force of perhaps 20,000 men might slip across the Channel. On the other hand, many eminent sailors and soldiers were by no means satisfied that a raid on a gigantic scale was an impracticable operation. The Government, then, remembering the awful panic which shook the United Kingdom in the year of Trafalgar, declined either to denude the British Isles of regular troops or to commit their defence to forces of an inferior description. The mistake that was made was in neglecting the organisation of the army of defence.

operations. But there were not men enough to meet an unexpected crisis of such magnitude as the war with Napoleon or the Indian Mutiny, nor to maintain a field army at full strength during a protracted struggle on a distant frontier. This, however, was not the fault of Parliament. It was impossible, much as certain soldiers desired it, to give such an establishment to the army as should cover all contingencies. Great Britain had to follow the rule of other countries, and to maintain as large an army as she could afford. And this, if the men were to be regulars, could not be large. Nevertheless, a further expansion was perfectly possible. The Militia, the Yeomanry, the Volunteers, and the colonial forces not only provided an immediate reserve of nearly 500,000 men, but might, under a comprehensive system, have furnished a secondary reserve, a Landwehr and a Landsturm combined, of as many more, at an exceedingly small price. It was here that the system of 1899 was so defective. Expansion of the field forces on service overseas was almost the last thing thought of. The War Office was prepared to embark two army corps in succession, completely equipped, to keep them at full strength for the duration of a campaign, and to protect the lines of communication by battalions of Militia Volunteers. But that anything further might be required never seems to have entered into their calculations. An active army of 100,000 men was the limit of Britain's armed strength—that is, an army just half the strength of that which fought against Napoleon, when the population of the United Kingdom was 14,000,000 as against 40,000,000.

The remedy lay in the organisation of the secondary reserve. Not a man who had borne arms, whether in the regulars or the auxiliary forces, should have been suffered to disappear into civil life. Every trained soldier should have been registered, and cadres should have been established in which every veteran who was still willing, in case of emergency, to serve his country should have been enrolled.[1] It would thus have been possible,

[1] There was no need that these men should have been called out for training. A small retaining fee (unnecessary in the case of the Yeomanry and Volunteers) would have been enough to give the Government a lien on their services in case of national emergency.

when the demand for more troops came, to lay hands at once on men of some experience, to assemble them and to equip them through their cadres with far greater rapidity and smoothness than through a central office, hurriedly established, and, at the same time, to enlarge the military departments, the medical, supply, ordnance, remount, in proportion to the enlargement of the army.

It was not that the importance of organisation had not been exemplified of recent years. The War of Secession, the People's War in France of 1870–1, the Cuban War of 1898, all told the same tale. M'Clellan's great army of 1862, Gambetta's levies on the Loire, were equally impotent. Want of organisation was even more fatal than want of discipline; and vast masses of men, admirably equipped, and animated by the highest patriotism, fell an easy prey to inferior forces, not because they failed in courage, but because their training was below that of their adversaries, their corporate existence of the shortest, and their organisation incomplete. And just as these unfortunates failed in the field, so did the forces assembled for the conquest of Cuba fail to withstand the ravages of disease. The warning to Great Britain, largely dependent, as were Republican France and the United States, on her citizen soldiers, was as clear as the handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar's palace. But that it was neglected was not surprising. It was no one's business to note, to analyse, and to apply the teachings derived from the operations and constitution of foreign armies, and the time of the officials at the War Office was already fully occupied with current work. Yet the blame is easily fixed. England presumes that her statesmen are as familiar with contemporary progress and political developments as are her merchants and manufacturers with new methods of business and the most recent inventions. Than the great General Staff of the German army, the military organisation which that staff evolved, and the resultant efficiency of the hosts which so easily defeated Austria and France, no more powerful forces were revealed during the nineteenth century. Yet few British statesmen appear to have had more than a faint inkling of their predominant influence upon the

affairs of nations; and not one had the good sense to endeavour to apply them to the military needs of the United Kingdom.

It may, perhaps, be urged in their defence that history, as taught in English Universities, took no notice of so trivial, though practical, a subject as Imperial defence, and that the officers of the army were not alone in their lack of professional education. The army of Great Britain is practically commanded by the nation, through its parliamentary representatives. Is it not the business of the nation to see that these representatives have some knowledge of the work with which they are entrusted?

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